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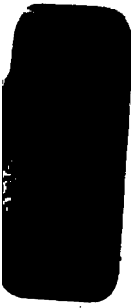
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Clinton E. Dawkins.



THE
HISTORY
OF
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST;

FROM THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES,
TILL THE FAMOUS DISPUTATION BETWEEN LUTHER AND MILTITZ,
IN 1520.

BY
THE LATE REV. JOSEPH MILNER.

WITH A CONTINUATION TO THE PRESENT TIME,

BY
THE REV. T. HAWEIS, LL.D. & M.D.
CHAPLAIN TO THE LATE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON,
&c. &c.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

EDINBURGH:
PETER BROWN AND THOMAS NELSON.

1836.

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PREFACE.

THE History of the Church of Christ, from its first formation in the days of the Apostles, and during its sufferings in the times that not only immediately followed their martyrdom or death, but during succeeding centuries, manifests a true and faithful exemplification of the predictions of our blessed Saviour, and also of the holy prophets who had preceded him,—that the walls of Zion should be built in troublous times. This was more particularly the case during the first ages of Christianity, when the Church had to contend not only with the unbelieving hierarchy of the Jews, but with the other nations or governments which were then avowedly heathen; and it may in fact be said, that when Constantine constituted it the religion of the world, (i. e. the Roman empire,) the seeds were then sown for its further persecution. From the heathen emperors or states, Christians had nothing to expect but persecution, because their setting forth of *strange gods*, as the Ephesians and Athenians said, was destructive of a system in which their carnal minds were bound up, and to which their natural propensities too strongly inclined them. But it seemed natural to conceive, that when Christianity was sanctioned by the high authority of the state, the case would have been different.

That this was not the case the following work will shew; and the various details therein given will also sufficiently evidence the truth, that the Church has been, from the time predicted, in the wilderness, and will continue there till the time appointed for her full and free deliverance.

The Publishers, in issuing the present Work, had only in view what they consider a valuable acquisition to many who may not be able to afford to go to the expense of the original publication:—

They are convinced that such a History must be acceptable to all Christians, when offered at a price within the reach of almost every one who is desirous of knowing the struggles which our forefathers made to obtain for us the valuable privileges we their offspring now enjoy. And the characters of the Historians whose labours we are now republishing, we need scarcely say, is not only in the highest estimation, but even beyond all praise.

Readers will be perfectly aware that this Publication in no way interferes with any later edition, either of Milner or Haweis, that is not already open to the public; and as in any of these no matter of fact is brought forward which invalidates the statements given in the original editions, they are persuaded the present will be generally acceptable.

CONTENTS.

CENTURY I.

A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE CHURCH, SO FAR AS IT MAY BE COLLECTED FROM THE SCRIPTURE.

	Page.
CHAP. I.—Jerusalem	1
CHAP. II.—Judea and Galilee	13
CHAP. III.—Samaria	14
CHAP. IV.—Ethiopia	15
CHAP. V.—Cæsarea	16
CHAP. VI.—Antioch and some other churches	18
CHAP. VII.—Galatia	21
CHAP. VIII.—Philippi	23
CHAP. IX.—Thessalonica	24
CHAP. X.—Berea and Athens	26
CHAP. XI.—Corinth	27
CHAP. XII.—Rome	29
CHAP. XIII.—Colosse	30
CHAP. XIV.—The Seven Churches of Asia	31
CHAP. XV.—The Remainder of the first Century	35

CENTURY II.

CHAP. I.—The History of Christians during the Reign of Trajan	52
CHAP. II.—The History of Christians during the Reigns of Adrian and Antoninus Pius	63
CHAP. III.—Justin Martyr	67
CHAP. IV.—The Emperor Marcus Antoninus and his persecution of the Christians	72
CHAP. V.—The Martyrdom of Polycarp	75
CHAP. VI.—The Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne	79
CHAP. VII.—The State of Christians under the Reigns of Commodus, Pertinax, and Julian—The Story of Peregrinus	86
CHAP. VIII.—Some account of Christian Authors who flourished in this Century	88
CHAP. IX.—The Heresies and Controversies of this Century reviewed; and an Idea of the State and Progress of Christianity during the course of it	90

CENTURY III.

CHAP. I.—Irenæus	95
CHAP. II.—Vettulian	98
CHAP. III.—Pantænus	101
CHAP. IV.—Clement Alexandrinus	102
CHAP. V.—The State of the Church during the Reigns of Severus and Caracalla	104
CHAP. VI.—State of Christianity during the Reigns of Maximian, Heliogabalus, Alexander, Maximinus, Gordian, and Philip	112
CHAP. VII.—The conversion of Cyprian	114
CHAP. VIII.—The beginnings of the Persecution of Decius—The Government of Cyprian till his retirement	118
CHAP. IX.—The History of Cyprian and of the Western Church during his Retirement of two Years	119
CHAP. X.—Cyprian's Settlement of his Church after his Return, and the History of the Western Church till the Persecution under Gallus	122
CHAP. XI.—The Effects of the Persecution of Decius in the Eastern Church	137
CHAP. XII.—The History of the Church during the Reign of Gallus	145
CHAP. XIII.—The pacific Part of Valerian's Reign	150
CHAP. XIV.—The last Acts and Martyrdom of Cyprian	157
CHAP. XV.—Cyprian compared with Origen	161
CHAP. XVI.—Other particulars of Valerian's Persecution	166
CHAP. XVII.—From the Reign of Gallienus to the End of the Century	169
CHAP. XVIII.—Some Account of Gregory Thaumaturgus, Theognostus, and Dionysius of Rome	177
CHAP. XIX.—The further Extension of the Gospel in this Century	180
CHAP. XX.—A short View of the external State of the Church in the Third Century	180
CHAP. XXI.—Testimonies to the Church of Christ from its Enemies	185

CHAP. XXII.—Connexion between the Doctrine and Practice of Primitive Christians	191
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CENTURY IV.

CHAP. I.—The Persecution of Dioclesian	195
CHAP. II.—A view of the State of the Christian Religion on its Establishment under Constantine	200
CHAP. III.—The Progress of the Arian Controversy till the Death of Constantine	212
CHAP. IV.—The Progress of the Arian Controversy during the Reign of Constantius	221
CHAP. V.—A View of Monasticism and other miscellaneous Circumstances from the Establishment of Christianity under Constantine to the Death of Constantius	228
CHAP. VI.—The Extension of the Gospel from the beginning of the fourth Century to the Death of Constantius	230
CHAP. VII.—The Decline of Idolatry in this Century to the Death of Constantius	232
CHAP. VIII.—Julian's Attempts to restore Idolatry	234
CHAP. IX.—The Church under Julian	238
CHAP. X.—The Church under Jovian	244
CHAP. XI.—The Church under Valens; the Death, Character, and Writings of Athanasius	248
CHAP. XII.—The Church under Valentinian—The beginnings of Ambrose	253
CHAP. XIII.—The Church of Christ under Gratian and Theodosius, till the Death of the former	256
CHAP. XIV.—The Heresy of the Priscillianists—the Conduct of Martin of Tours—the Progress of Superstition	259
CHAP. XV.—The Conduct of Ambrose under the Emperor Valentinian, and the Persecution which he endured from the Emperor's Mother Justina	261
CHAP. XVI.—The Church under Theodosius	264
CHAP. XVII.—Reflections on Ecclesiastical Establishments	266
CHAP. XVIII.—The private Life and the Works of Ambrose	273
CHAP. XIX.—The Propagation of the Gospel among Barbarians, the Progress of Novatianism, and of Monasticism	277
CHAP. XX.—Christian Authors in this Century	279
CHAP. XXI.—Ephraim the Syrian	281
CHAP. XXII.—History of Poitiers	284
CHAP. XXIII.—Basil of Cæsarea	286
CHAP. XXIV.—Gregory Nazianzen	288

CENTURY V.

CHAP. I.—John Chrysostom	291
CHAP. II.—Augustine's Confession abridged	297
CHAP. III.—The Pelagian Controversy	322
CHAP. IV.—Pelagian Papers	329
CHAP. V.—A short View of Augustine's City of God	357
CHAP. VI.—Augustine's Conduct towards the Donatists	341
CHAP. VII.—The rest of Augustine's Works reviewed	345
CHAP. VIII.—Miscellaneous Particulars concerning Augustine	352
CHAP. IX.—The Theology of Augustine	354
CHAP. X.—The Life and Works of Jerom	357
CHAP. XI.—The Church of Christ in the West	361
CHAP. XII.—The Church of Christ in the East	374
CHAP. XIII.—Christian Writers of this Century	377

CENTURY VI.

CHAP. I.—The Life of Fulgentius, and the State of the African Churches in his Time	383
CHAP. II.—The State of the Church in other Parts of the Roman Empire, till the Death of Justin, including the Life of Cæsarius	388
CHAP. III.—The State of the Church during the Reign of Justinian	389
CHAP. IV.—Miscellaneous Affairs to the End of the Century	393
CHAP. V.—Gregory the First, Bishop of Rome. His Pastoral Labours	395
CHAP. VI.—Gregory's Conduct toward the Emperors Mauritius and Phocas	408

CHAP. VII.—Gregory's Conduct with respect to England,	408
CHAP. VIII.—The Works of Gregory,	414
CHAP. IX.—Writers of this Century,	416

CENTURY VII.

CHAP. I.—The English Church,	417
CHAP. II.—The Propagation of the Gospel in Germany and its Neighbourhood,	422
CHAP. III.—The General History of the Church in this Century,	424
CHAP. IV.—Authors of this Century,	429

CENTURY VIII.

CHAP. I.—Venerable Bede, the English Presbyter,	430
CHAP. II.—Miscellaneous Particulars,	433
CHAP. III.—The Controversy on Images. The Maturity of Antichrist,	434
CHAP. IV.—The Propagation of the Gospel in this Century, including the Life of Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz,	442
CHAP. V.—Authors of this Century,	449

CENTURY IX.

CHAP. I.—A general View of the State of Religion in this Century,	451
CHAP. II.—The Paulicians,	453
CHAP. III.—The Opposition made to the Corruptions of Popery in this Century, particularly by Claudius, Bishop of Turin,	456
CHAP. IV.—The Case of Gotthechalus,	459
CHAP. V.—The Propagation of the Gospel in this Century,	461

CENTURY X.

CHAP. I.—A general View of the Church in this Century,	467
CHAP. II.—The Propagation of the Gospel in this Century,	470
CHAP. III.—An Apology for Christian Missions,	474
CHAP. IV.—Writers and eminent Men in this Century,	476

CENTURY XI.

CHAP. I.—A general View of the Church in this Century,	480
CHAP. II.—The Opposition made to the Errors of Popery,	482
CHAP. III.—The Propagation of the Gospel in this Century,	485
CHAP. IV.—The State of the Church in England,	486
CHAP. V.—Anselm,	489

CENTURY XII.

CHAP. I.—A general View of the Life of Bernard,	495
CHAP. II.—Bernard's Defence of Evangelical Truth against Abelard,	500
CHAP. III.—Controversies of Bernard with several others, real or supposed Heretics. Some account of the Cathari,	511
CHAP. IV.—The writings of Bernard reviewed,	517
CHAP. V.—Death and Character of Bernard,	525
CHAP. VI.—General State of the Church in this Century,	526
CHAP. VII.—The Propagation of the Gospel,	529
CHAP. VIII.—Writers and eminent Persons in this Century,	531

CENTURY XIII.

CHAP. I.—Peter Waldo,	538
CHAP. II.—The real Character of the Waldenses,	536
CHAP. III.—The Doctrine and Discipline of the Waldenses,	540
CHAP. IV.—The Persecutions of the Waldenses,	547
CHAP. V.—The general State of the Church in this Century,	558
CHAP. VI.—Authors and eminent Persons in this Century,	563
CHAP. VII.—Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln,	571

CENTURY XIV.

CHAP. I.—The general State of the Church in this Century,	579
CHAP. II.—Thomas Bradwardine,	584
CHAP. III.—John Wicliffe,	594

CENTURY XV.

CHAP. I.—The Lollards,	612
CHAP. II.—The Council of Constance, including the Cases of John Huss and Jerom of Prague,	626
CHAP. III.—The Hussites till the beginning of the Reformation,	654
CHAP. IV.—A brief Review of the Fifteenth Century,	657

CENTURY XVI.

CHAP. I.—The Reformation under the conduct of Luther.—Preliminaries,	669
CHAP. II.—The beginning of the Controversy concerning Indulgences,	663
CHAP. III.—The Progress of the Controversy concerning Indulgences, till the Conclusion of the Conferences between Luther and Cajetan,	680
CHAP. IV.—The Controversy continued. The Attempts of Mittits and of Eckius,	699

CONTINUED FROM HAWES'S HISTORY.

CHAP. I.—On the Outward Church,	711
CHAP. II.—Doctrines of the Reformation, and Union of Sentiment among the Reformers,	718
CHAP. III.—From the Diet at Augsburg to the religious Peace in the same city,	720
CHAP. IV.—Progress of Reformation,	723
CHAP. V.—Of the Learning and Heresies of the Times,	725
CHAP. VI.—Accessions to the professing Christian Church,	726
CHAP. VII.—On the Progress of the True Church,	727
Sect. I.—The Greek Church,	ib.
Sect. II.—The Church of Rome,	728
Sect. III.—On the Church Reformed from the Errors of Popery,	731
I. The Lutheran Church,	ib.
II. Of the Churches called Reformed or Calvinistic,	736
III. The Heterodox Church,	742

CENTURY XVII.

CHAP. I.—Progress of the External Church,	745
CHAP. II.—On the Church of Rome,	748
CHAP. III.—On the Greek Church,	756
CHAP. IV.—On the Protestant Church,	757
I. The Lutheran Church,	ib.
II. On the Reformed Churches—England,	763
Scotland,	768
Ireland,	769
Holland,	ib.
France,	771
Poland, Transylvania, and Hungary,	772

CENTURY XVIII.

CHAP. I.—General Progress of the Church externally,	773
CHAP. II.—On the Romish Church,	774
CHAP. III.—Italy,	779
I. Naples and its dependencies,	ib.
II. Rome and the Ecclesiastical State,	780
III. The Upper Regions of Italy,	781
Spain,	782
Portugal,	ib.
France,	783
Austria,	ib.
Poland,	784
Germany,	784
CHAP. IV.—On the Greek and Eastern Churches,	785
The Russian Church,	787
CHAP. V.—The Lutheran Church,	792
CHAP. VI.—On the Reformed Church,	796
Great Britain,	811
Scotland,	812
Ireland,	812
The British Colonies,	813
Geneva,	814
France,	815
Holland,	ib.
Germany,	816
Conclusion,	ib.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

CENTURY I.

CHAPTER I.

A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE CHURCH, SO FAR AS
IT MAY BE COLLECTED FROM THE SCRIPTURE.

SECTION I.

JERUSALEM.

THAT "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in the name of Jesus Christ, beginning at Jerusalem,"^a is a passage of scripture, which at once points out what the Christian religion is, and where we may look for its beginning. We are to describe the rise of a dispensation the most glorious to God, and the most beneficent to man. Christianity found mankind in an universal state of sin and misery. In Judea alone something of the worship of the true God existed. The forms of the Mosaic economy subsisted, but were greatly obscured and corrupted with Pharisaic traditions, and Sadducean profaneness. The ancient people of God had defiled themselves with heathen profligacy: and though there wanted not a multitude of teachers among them, yet, when He, who knew what was in man, saw the spiritual condition of this people, "he was moved with compassion toward them, because they fainted, and were as sheep without a shepherd." Certainly they were in possession of a degree at least of moral information, though that was extremely defective, and, in many points of view, fundamentally erroneous. But of that instruction, which consists in repentance and remission of sins, they were totally destitute. Notwithstanding the

light of the Old Testament, the provision of sacrifices, the declaration of so many prophecies concerning the Messiah, and the examples of so many holy men, who, in that dark and preparatory dispensation, had learned to fear God, and to believe in his promises of grace, it does not appear, that the body of the Jewish nation were, in their religious state, materially better than the rest of the world. That men needed such a change of disposition as in scripture is expressed by the term *metanoia*, that they must become new creatures, and receive the forgiveness of sins by faith in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, were ideas unknown in Judea:—if indeed we except the dim light which visited the souls of Zacharias, of Simeon, of Anna, and of a few other devout persons, who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Such was the dismal night, in which the Sun of Righteousness made his appearance in the world. Scarce in any age had ignorance and wickedness a more general prevalence. The history by Josephus evinces this. This author dwells chiefly indeed on public and political affairs; yet he throws a sufficient light on the manners of the times, and shews, that the extreme impiety and profligacy of the Herodian princes were but too faithfully transcribed into the lives of their subjects. There had been periods of Jewish story more favourable to godliness: for instance the age of Joshua, of David, of Ezra and of Nehemiah. For some persons there ever were who, at least, implicitly rested on the God of Israel, and trusted in the Redeemer that was to come. But the darkest season was chosen for the exhibition of the Light of Life by him, "who hath put the times and seasons in his own power."

To know our own depravity and helplessness, and, by faith in Christ, to know "ex-

^a Luke xxiv. 47.

perimentally" the suitable and the efficacious cure, is doubtless the genuine secret of true piety. But wherever wickedness and profaneness have spread very generally, the knowledge of these doctrines is usually lost. Amidst a thousand disputes even on religious subjects, these are erased out of men's creed,—the very doctrines—which alone can be the means of freeing them from vice and folly. It was their ignorance of these things, which moved the Son of God to lament the uninformed condition of the Jews in this day. To dwell on the history of Christ himself is foreign to my design. Indeed a few souls were converted during his abode on earth: but the five hundred brethren, who saw him all at one time after his resurrection, seem to have made the sum total of his disciples. And it may further be observed, that all these, and the eleven sincere Apostles themselves, were possessed with notions of a temporal kingdom, the rock on which their countrymen fatally split in their expositions of the scriptures relating to the expected Messiah; and that they had not yet learned, with any clearness and steadiness of apprehension, to set their affections on things above.

And now was the critical moment, when it pleased God to erect the first Christian church at Jerusalem. This was the first of those effusions of the Spirit of God, which from age to age have visited the earth, since the coming of Christ, and prevented it from being quite overrun with ignorance and sin. It is an unspeakable advantage, that we have the sacred narrative to unfold this to our understandings. The want of such an advantage will appear too fully in the history of the succeeding effusions of the Divine Spirit. Our duty however is not to complain, but to be thankful. If we carefully attend to this first instance, it will serve as a specimen, by which to try other religious phenomena: and whether they lead to genuine piety or not, may generally be judged from their agreement or disagreement with this.

Let us then observe the circumstances in which this effusion of the Holy Spirit was vouchsafed. As repentance and remission of sins were leading doctrines of Christ's religion, the most ample room had been made for them by the completion of his redemption.

^b In the term *effusion* there is not here included the idea of the miraculous or extraordinary operations of the Spirit of God, but only of such operations as he vouchsafes in every age to his church. The plan of this history has little connection with the former. It is, however, to be remembered, that a remarkable display of the Divine Grace, at some particular season, is always intended by the expressions *EFFUSION* of the Spirit of God, or *EFFUSION* of the Divine or Holy Spirit.—On this occasion the term "out-pouring" of the Spirit of God, might be fully justified by the prophetic language of Scripture; it is also extremely significant, and exactly coincides with the author's meaning;—but it is omitted because it is grown so unfashionable that the ideas, which ought to be affixed to it, are almost entirely lost.

He had offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of men, "was risen" from the dead "for our justification," and in the sight of his disciples was just ascended up to heaven. That the Gospel, the good news for penitent sinners, the good news of reconciliation with God, should begin at Jerusalem, the scene of so much wickedness perpetrated, and of so much grace abused, was itself no mean argument of the riches of Divine Goodness, and was an illustrious exemplification of the grand purpose of the Gospel,—to justify the ungodly, and to quicken the dead. By the order of their Divine Master the Apostles remained at Jerusalem, waiting for the promised Holy Spirit, "which they had heard of him,"^c and abode in mutual charity, and in the fervent exercise of prayer and supplication. What the Holy Spirit was to do for them, they seemed little to understand; if one may conjecture from their last question to their Master, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" It is natural to apprehend, that they were feasting their imaginations with the delightful prospect of a splendid kingdom, attended with all the circumstances of external pomp and grandeur. Principalities and lordships were, in their fancy, soon to be assumed in the room of fishermen's nets and boats, and they pleased themselves with the notion of their Master's external dominion in the world. Not that they were without a genuine taste for something infinitely better. At any rate, they afford us an useful lesson;—"they continued in prayer and supplication." They, who do so in every age, shall doubtless understand, in God's due time, what the kingdom of heaven means, and find by happy experience that kingdom established in their own souls, even "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

During this interesting crisis, we do not find them employed in any other business than this of prayer, except in filling up the apostolical college of twelve, by the substitution of Matthias in the room of the unhappy Judas, who, for the love of a little gain of this world, had unfitted himself for the riches of the next, and rendered himself unworthy to partake of the marvellous scene now about to be exhibited. Behold then the twelve Apostles, Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, Judas the brother of James, and Matthias, expecting and longing for the unspeakable blessings of true Christianity!

The Pentecost, one of the Jewish festivals, was the era of the Divine Visitation. The Apostles were all in harmony assembled together; when lo! suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they

^c Acts i. 4.

was sitting. Their Master had, in his conference with Nicodemus,⁴ compared the operations of the Holy Spirit to the wind, and the sound from heaven on this occasion was a just emblem of the power of the Divine Influence now commencing. And there appeared "unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them:"⁵ Another emblem no less just, which the church of England uses in her hymn to the Holy Ghost in the ordination-office,

Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.

In truth they now found they were "baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire."⁶ And the effects in purifying their hearts, in enlightening their understandings, and in furnishing them with gifts, and zeal, and boldness, hitherto unknown, were very soon exhibited. They were all filled with the "Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."⁷ Of the many miraculous gifts now imparted, this of tongues, at once so useful for the propagation of the Gospel, and so striking an attestation of its truth, first displayed itself to the amazement of a number of Jews, out of every nation under heaven, who heard these Galileans speak each in his own language. There is reason to believe, that as many of them were devout men, they had been prepared by Divine Grace for the effectual reception of the Gospel, and that a considerable part of the first converts were of their body.

While many were expressing their admiration at this strange event, others, whom we may suppose to have been chiefly the native Jews, who understood not these several languages, derided the Apostles as intoxicated with wine: and now the zeal of Peter was stirred up to preach both to those who admired, and to those who scorned. He begged them to have so much candour, as not rashly to suppose them to be men overcome with liquor, which the very time of the day rendered improbable, the third hour of the day, answering to our nine in the morning, when it seems no Jew was ever known to be in that situation. And as his audience professed a regard for the sacred oracles, he pointed out to them a remarkable prophecy in the second chapter of Joel, then fulfilling, namely, the promise of an effusion of the Spirit upon all flesh, attended with dreadful punishments on those who should despise it:—yet that whoever, in the deep sense of his sinfulness and misery, should call on the name of the Lord, should be saved. He then shews them how God had fulfilled his own purposes in the death of Jesus, at the very time when they had been execut-

ing the dictates of their own malice. He proceeds to testify also of his resurrection, according to the testimony of David, in Psal. xvi. and cx. in both which Psalms it was evident, that not David himself, but Christ was the subject of the prophecy. He openly declares, that he himself and his brethren were witnesses of the resurrection of their Master, that He was exalted to heaven, and had received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, which He had now shed forth on the Apostles, and concerning which they now had the plain demonstration of their senses. The conclusion which he draws from this chain of argument, supported by the mutual strength of facts and prophecies, was this,—that the despised person, whom they had thought unworthy to live, and had exposed to the most painful and ignominious death, was owned by the God of their fathers to be the Lord and Messiah, who was the expectation of the Jews, and through whom alone salvation was exhibited to sinful men.

The design of the whole sermon was evidently to produce conviction of sin in the hearers; and it pleased God to crown it with success. Multitudes were pricked in their hearts: they found themselves guilty of murdering the Christ of God: and so powerfully were they struck with a sense of their extreme unworthiness, that they found themselves also destitute of all resources in themselves. They cry to Peter and to the rest, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Similar indeed is the beginning of all true repentance, when men find themselves really lost, helpless, and willing to be led in any way which God shall please, because they have no ability in themselves, and "there is no health in them."⁸ Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Thus the doctrine of repentance, and remission of sins, in the name of Jesus, began at Jerusalem. The people were called upon to "loath themselves for their past iniquities," and to give themselves up to God for an entire renovation of soul; and the Grace of God in Christ was offered to every one of them. The Apostle exhorted them all to receive this grace, by believing on Jesus for the remission of sins, with a submission to his ordinance of baptism as an emblem of washing away their sins; and he assured them, that God would receive them into his favour in this way: that however guilty they were, all their sins should be pardoned,

⁴ John iii.

⁵ Acts ii.

⁶ Matt. iii. 11.

⁷ The Church of England Confession.

as if they had never been committed; and the Holy Ghost should be poured on them also: for the promise of it was very general;—to them, to their children, to the most distant lands, wherever God should call men to reconciliation by Jesus Christ. Thus did St. Peter convince his hearers of sin, and instruct them in the way of salvation.

They, whose hearts God had smitten with a sense of guilt, were consoled by the grace of forgiveness; and “with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.—Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls.”

In this manner did the convictions and consolations of the Holy Ghost attend the first preaching of St. Peter. And this great multitude appear to have been fully converted to Christianity: For they continued “steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Here we see the regular appearance of the first Christian church. These men were not Christians in name only; they understood and believed the apostolical doctrine concerning repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ: they continued united to the pastors whom God had made instruments of their conversion: they received constantly the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, in which they enjoyed real communion with their Saviour; and prayer was their daily employment and delight. Their holy boldness towards God, and their joyful sensation of forgiveness, were tempered with a godly fear. Every soul was possessed with this consistent mixture of holy joy and fear.

They had felt the pangs of guilt: they had seen what a price was paid for their redemption: they “rejoiced with trembling,” as men just emerged from the pit of destruction; and the same Spirit which cried, *Abba, Father,*^b in their hearts, taught them to reverence His justice and His holiness, to fear Him, and to dread sin above all other evils. And though it does not appear to have been any injunction of the Apostles, that they should live together in a community of goods, and though experience soon taught the first Christians, that the general establishment and continuance of such an usage was impracticable, yet, doubtless, this practice for the present was a rare and convincing instance of mutual charity, and proved how soon the operations of Divine Grace had loosened their minds from the love of this world. They “sold their goods and possessions, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” In this happy frame of mind they spent

much of their time in the temple, and in discharging the mutual offices of social kindness: even their bodily food was received with a gladness before unknown. The Grace of God gave a pleasant tincture to every object with which they conversed; and while they extolled it with their hearts and lips, they, as yet, found favour with all the people. The natural enmity of the heart against the Gospel of Christ did not at first shew itself, and the purity of their lives could not but recommend them to the esteem of others. “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Thus plainly St. Luke intimates whose grace it was that effected all this, and that his hand, in the Divine Effusion here described, ought ever to be acknowledged.

A miracle wrought soon after by Peter and John on a lame man, a well known beggar above forty years old, gave a farther attestation to their divine authority. Peter was hence led to preach¹ to the admiring multitude the same doctrine of repentance and remission, and exalted the Lord Jesus, as the Holy One, and the Just, and the Prince of Life, to whom they had wickedly preferred even a murderer, Barabbas. He disclaims all merit in himself or in his colleagues in the miracle: He shews that God had glorified his Son Jesus; and that it was through faith in his name, that the act had been performed. He charitably alleges their ignorance, as the only possible alleviation of their guilt; and which indeed alone prevented it from being unpardonable. He exhorts them to repentance and conversion, and lays open to their view the prospect not of a temporal, but of a spiritual kingdom; in the hope of which they were to rejoice, and patiently bear the afflictions of this present life: he warns them at the same time of the threats denounced by Moses against the despisers of the Messiah, through whom alone salvation was offered to all nations, though the first invitation was addressed to the Jews.

The Church was now increased to five thousand; and the signal for persecution was raised by the magistrates of Jerusalem, many of whom were Sadducees, enemies to the doctrine of a resurrection, and, in truth, to every thing that had any tendency to raise men’s minds above the world. The two Apostles were imprisoned that evening, but their examination was deferred till the next day. The high priest, and the persons of greatest authority, looked on this matter as an occasion of sufficient consequence to require the calling of a solemn court. Peter to their interrogatories frankly answers, that the miracle had been “wrought in the name of Jesus, whom ye crucified, whom God

^b Galatians iv 6.

¹ Acts iii.

raised from the dead." He boldly rebukes them for their contempt of Him, who is the only Saviour: For "there is none other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."

The wisdom and boldness of two unlettered fishermen, who had been companions of Jesus, struck the court with astonishment. But finding no present opportunity of gratifying their malice, on account of the splendour of the miracle, they dismissed them with a strict charge to be silent in future concerning the name of Jesus, though the Apostles ingeniously confessed their inability to comply with such an order, because "they must obey God rather than man."

The Apostles returned to their company, and reporting the threats of the magistrates, they all, with united supplication, intreated the Lord to grant them boldness to persevere, notwithstanding the menaces of His and their enemies. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, and enabled to proceed with calm intrepidity.

The most perfect unanimity as yet prevailed among the Christians; and they not only professed to have all things common, but also practised the rule accordingly with the greatest cheerfulness. Divine Grace was largely diffused among them. The poor lacked nothing: the richer brethren converted their possessions into money, and left the distribution of the whole to the discretion of the Apostles. And, in this liberality, Barnabas of Cyprus, a Levite, who had lands of his own, most probably in his native country, was eminently distinguished.

It appeared very manifest, that the Apostles enjoyed much more of the power of Christ's religion than they had ever done while their Master was with them on earth. Such was the effect of the effusion of the Spirit. We hear no more of their dreams concerning a temporal kingdom. The courage of Peter in confronting the magistrates, forms a perfect contrast to his timidity in denying his Master. Wherever the same repentance, faith, hope, charity, heavenly-mindedness appear, THERE is true Christianity; and there also the enmity of the world will be excited. Of this something has already discovered itself, and more is now calling for our attention, as well as something much more grievous,—the detection of hypocrisy in certain professors.

The case of Judas had already prepared the Church to expect the appearance of tares among the wheat; and our Lord's parable alluded to, had assured them of it. Yet when such things occur, good men are often too much surprised, and the wicked unreasonably triumph. There was one A-

nanias among the disciples, whose conscience had so far been impressed, as to respect that doctrine and fellowship, to which he had joined himself, but whose heart was never divorced from the love of the world.

A regard for his reputation induced him to sell his possessions with the rest: but the fear of poverty, and the want of faith in God, disposed him to reserve part of the price, while he brought the other to the Apostles. Peter upbraided him with his being under the influence of Satan, "in lying to the Holy Ghost:" shewed him that the guilt of his hypocrisy was aggravated by this consideration, that the action was committed not against man, but against God; and that nothing could be said to extenuate his baseness, because he was under no necessity of selling his property at all, or of laying it at the Apostles' feet, after he had sold it. Immediately the unhappy man fell down dead: and, about three hours after, his wife Sapphira was made a similar monument of Divine Justice, as she had been partaker of her husband's guilt.

Such a proof of the discernment of spirits, and of the power of punishing hypocrisy, resting in the governors of the Church, filled all who heard these things with awe. The Lord had now shewn his holiness, as well as his grace: and the love of the world, the standing heresy, which infects his Church in all ages, was a second time punished by a signal interposition of heaven. Multitudes of both sexes were added to the Church, chiefly of the common people. Of the rest indeed, though some could not but entertain favourable sentiments of Christianity, yet, among the rich and great, none durst hazard his character so far as to espouse it.

The Sadducees appear at this time to have had the chief sway in the Jewish state. These formed a licentious, worldly-minded sect, and in their opinions, they were the most corrupt of all those which at that time were maintained in Judea. The high priest and his party were of this sect, and were filled with indignation, to see the progress of the Gospel. Their first step was to imprison the Apostles, who, by night, through the ministry of an angel, were set free, and ordered to preach in the temple. The next morning a full Sanhedrim was convened, and the Apostles were ordered to be brought into court. An angel had opened the prison doors; and the court was astonished to find the prisoners escaped out of prison: they were, however, informed, that they were preaching in the temple. The favourable regard of the common people obliged the Sanhedrim to use some address in conducting their prisoners in a gentle manner

before the court. The high priest upbraids them with their disobedience to the former injunction of silence, to whom they returned their former answer, that "they ought to obey God rather than men." They bore witness to the resurrection of Christ, and declared, that "God had exalted him with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," and that the "Holy Ghost, whom God bestows on those who obey him, witnessed" the same thing. With such plainness did these first Christians lay open the real nature of the Gospel, and exhibit it as something extremely different from a mere system of morals, though it included all good morality in its nature. The testimony of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins through his blood, and the operations of the Holy Ghost, as they were doubtless the peculiar characteristics of Christianity, so they were those things which most offended the Jewish rulers, and have been indeed the chief object of the enmity of unconverted men in all ages.

The spirit of persecution was proceeding to exercise itself in violent counsels. There was however one Gamaliel among them, a Pharisee, of a sect, not indeed inimical to the doctrine of a resurrection, and by no means so heterodox in general as the Sadducees, though on the whole agreeing with them in the hatred of Christianity. This man was judicious, learned, and respectable, and possessed much worldly prudence. Beyond this no evidence appears. Providence made an important use of him, at this time, to prolong twelve most valuable lives, who were designed to spread the Gospel through the world; and by their inspired writings, (not one of which was yet published) to speak to us at this day. Gamaliel, by some authentic historical precedents, instructed the members of the court, that persons, who rose up to propagate new sects, if not sent of God, were soon annihilated. He wished them to exercise forbearance and moderation toward the Apostles, whose influence would soon come to nothing, if it were merely human; if divine, to attempt its destruction would be equally foolish and impious. This sage advice was followed, and the Apostles were dismissed, but not without stripes, and a severe charge given them, no more to preach in the name of Jesus. They ceased not however to "teach and preach Jesus Christ, and rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

The Church was now much enlarged, consisting partly of native, partly of foreign Jews, who used the Greek language, called on that account Hellenists or Grecians. These supposed, that in the daily supply of the poor, the Apostles had not ministered equal relief to their widows, as to those of the Hebrews. Men who know any thing

of the work of God, in the visitation of his Holy Spirit, and have any acquaintance with the fulness of employ, which Christian ministers have in great and populous cities, in instructing, warning, consoling, and directing awakened and serious minds, will not wonder, if, through inadvertence, some temporary neglects might have taken place. The Apostles however, with great mildness and wisdom, soon regulated this affair. They informed the disciples, that the ministry of the word of God must be attended to in the first place, and must not be neglected for the sake of providing for the poor. They therefore advised the disciples to look out for seven holy and wise men, to whom this business should be committed. "But we," say they, "will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."¹ O that those who call themselves their successors, were always disposed in like manner!—The whole multitude consented with pleasure. Seven deacons were amicably elected, Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, every one of whom has a Grecian name, and therefore may have been a Hellenist; and in this easy way the first appearances of contention were blasted in the Church, and seven coadjutors were appointed to the Apostles, some of whom, at least, were of signal service, not only in temporal, but also in spiritual things. So happy is it to be under the conduct of the Holy Spirit, and so amiably did the love of Christ then rule in the hearts of his people. Even many of the priests now obeyed the Gospel, and Jerusalem saw continually large accessions made to the Church.

Of these deacons Stephen was at first the most distinguished. A synagogue of Hellenist Jews held a contest with him, the result of which filled them with such vexation, that they suborned men to accuse him of blasphemy against Moses, and against God. By this artifice Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrim, where God threw a lustre over his countenance, which even his enemies could not but observe. In his defence he boldly rebuked the Jews, and shewed that their conduct was but too faithful a copy of that of their fathers, who had treated Moses and the prophets with contempt, and had murdered a number of those, who had prophesied of the coming of the Just One,—of whom they had now been the betrayers and murderers, while they vainly gloried in the magnificence of their temple, and put external services in the room of genuine piety.

Thus did Stephen aim at the same point with Peter, to convince his audience of sin in the first place, and to leave them no hope

in their own righteousness. Seldom has the contrast between the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God appeared more striking. "They were cut to the heart, and gashed upon him with their teeth." But he, "full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God," and what he saw, he openly confessed. Their patience was exhausted, and they stoned him to death, while he was calling upon his Divine Master, and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Thus firm and constant was his faith; and his charity was no less conspicuous. For, he knelt down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" thus shewing how entirely void of all malice were those vehement rebukes, which he had uttered against their wickedness, and which men of pusillanimous prudence are in all ages disposed to condemn. And when he had said this, he fell asleep;—"the usual beautiful phrase of the New Testament, to express the death of saints, and at the same time to intimate their expectation of the resurrection.

The eloquence of a Cicero would be mere feebleness on this occasion. All praise is below the excellency of that spirit, which shone in this first of martyrs. Let it stand as an example of the genuine temper of martyrdom, of real faith in Christ, and of real charity to men;—and let heroes of the world hide their heads in confusion.

Judea seems to have been at this time without a Procurator, Pontius Pilate having been disgraced, and Vitellius, the governor of Syria, was a man of great moderation toward the Jews. In these circumstances the mildness of the Roman government was eventually the occasion of a severe persecution to the Church. The Jewish magistrates, who a little before had not the power of life and death, and could not murder the Lord of Life without the intervention of their Roman masters, were now left to themselves, at least in religious concerns, and Stephen was their first Christian victim. He was buried with great lamentation by the Church, and a considerable number suffered soon after.

A young man called Saul, an Hellenist* of Tarsus, a person of an active ambitious spirit, who had been educated at Jerusalem under Gamaliel, and outstripped all his equals in Judaical learning, distinguished himself in this persecution. He took care of the clothes of the witnesses who were employed in stoning Stephen, and made havock of the church, entering into "every

house, and haling men and women, he committed them to prison; and when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them." In truth, the disciples seemed now to be left to the rage of men disposed to show them no mercy; and a superficial observer might have supposed, that the fate of Theudas and Judas, mentioned by Gamaliel, was about to attend the Christians. Men had not yet learned, that the "blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church." The religious worship of the disciples must, doubtless have suffered a grievous interruption. Indeed none of them found it safe to remain at Jerusalem. The Apostles alone thought good to stand their ground, and, by the watchful care of their God, they were preserved. The Christians, dispersed throughout Judea and Samaria, preached the word wherever they went. And thus this persecution was the first occasion of the diffusion of the Gospel through various regions, and what was meant to annihilate it, was overruled to extend it exceedingly. But we shall confine ourselves in this section to the Church of Jerusalem.

Saul, who was all attention to the work of persecution, was vexed to hear that a number of the Christians had escaped to Damascus, an ancient city of Syria; and he procured a commission from the high priest to bring them bound to Jerusalem. It was a considerable journey, but religious glory was his idol. When he was near to Damascus, a sudden light from heaven, exceeding even that of the sun, arrested the daring zealot, and struck him to the ground. At the same time a voice called to him, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." In this marvellous manner did the Son of God make known his truth, his majesty, and his power to this enterprising persecutor, and evince, to all ages, what he can do to the "praise of the glory of his grace." The will of Saul was broken, and made submissive to God for the first time, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do," was his cry; and whenever this is uttered from the heart, it will not fail to bring down the divine blessing. He was directed to go into Damascus, where he remained three days without sight and without food, yet constantly employed in prayer for divine grace and mercy. Thus the necessity of the conviction of sin was preached to him with circumstances more extraordinary than those, which took place upon the preaching to the three thousand first converts; but the spiritual instruction conveyed was precisely the same. The work of converting grace may

* Acts vii.

* That is, one born and bred a Jew in some country where the Greek language was spoken.

• Acts viii.

vary very much in non essential circumstances,—its nature never varies. The grace of forgiveness by Jesus Christ would have been no welcome news to this Pharisee, had he still remained in the confidence of his own righteousness; but now it was as life from the dead. After three days, by the particular direction of a vision from the Lord Jesus, Ananias, a disciple of Damascus, was sent to him with the tidings of peace. He had heard of the active malice of Saul, but was encouraged to go by a positive declaration that Saul was a chosen vessel. Ananias opened his commission by informing Saul, that the Lord Jesus had sent him, to the end that he might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Both these effects immediately took place. Ananias exhorted him to delay no longer, but to “wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”^a He was baptized, and soon refreshed both in mind and body: and from that time the whole vehemence of his natural character, and the whole power of his intellectual faculties, which were doubtless of the first magnitude among men, were sanctified to the service of Jesus Christ; and to his death, he was engaged in a course of labours in the Church with unparalleled success. For this is he, who is commonly known by the name of St. Paul, and “his memorial is blessed for ever.” He was particularly commissioned to preach to the Gentiles, and of all the Apostles he seems to have entered with the greatest penetration into the nature of Christianity. Salvation by grace through faith was his darling theme, a doctrine diametrically opposite to the self-righteous scheme in which he had been wont to glory. His countrymen, the Jews, were particularly fierce in opposing this grand article of the Gospel, and were stung to the quick when attacked by their once favourite champion. No doubt he had been sincere in his religion formerly; yet, is he far from exculpating himself on this account. On the contrary he magnifies the grace of the Lord Jesus, as extended to him, a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious, and the chief of sinners, in whom the long-suffering of the Lord had been exhibited, “for a pattern to them, who shall hereafter believe on him to life everlasting;”—that mankind may know, that God accepts sinners on Christ’s account alone, and through faith in his blood; and that nothing can be more contrary to the whole design of the Gospel, than to seek salvation by our own works of any kind. He seems ever after to have lamented deeply the miserable state of his countrymen, who “had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”^b He pitied their self-righteous notions: he knew how

deceitful those notions were to those, who were under the power of them, by his own experience: and, while he rejoiced on account of that grace, which had redeemed himself from hell, he commiserated those, who were fast advancing thither in fearless presumption. In the third chapter of the Philippians he gives us a very particular view of himself. To trust in anything for salvation, except Christ alone, is with him to “have confidence in the flesh.” No man appeared once to have had more just pretensions to such confidence than himself. His regular circumcision on the eighth day, Hebrew descent, Pharisaic strictness, zealous Judaism, and blameless morals, seemed to exalt him above the common level of his countrymen: but he declares that he “reckoned all these things as dung, that he might win Christ;” and in him alone he desires to be found without his own righteousness to trust in; and he maintains the settled determination of his soul in this article of justification. Were it not for the perverse blindness of fallen nature, one might be astonished to find many persons of learning and good sense, after reading this account of the Apostle by himself, still endeavouring to represent him as mixing grace and works in the subject of justification, and describing him as only excluding ceremonial works from the office of justifying a sinner. But to proceed:—

Having preached Christ for three years abroad, he went up to Jerusalem. Here he attempted to join himself to the Church, but the remembrance of what he had been, and the very imperfect account which they had of what he then was, prevented the Christians from receiving him, till Barnabas brought him to the Apostles, (two of them only, Peter, and James the Lord’s brother,) and informed them of his genuine conversion. This cleared up all doubts; and he was now engaged in the work of the ministry at Jerusalem, and would gladly have remained there, but the Lord, by a vision, assured him, that the Jews would not receive his testimony; and that the great scene of his labours was to be among the Gentiles.

In fact, some address was needful in his brethren to save his life from the rage of the Jews, and he was conducted to his native city of Tarsus. By this time, however, the fury of persecution subsided: the Lord gave rest to his Church: and the disciples both at Jerusalem and elsewhere, walked in the very best manner, in which they can walk on this side heaven, “in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.” Where these go together, excesses of all sorts are prevented: and inward

^a Acts xxiii. 16.^b 1 Tim. i.

• Rom. x

• Gal. i. 18, 19.

joy and outward obedience conspire to demonstrate, that there Christ reigns indeed.

Yet so slow are men to receive new divine truths, especially those which militate against old prejudices, that the Christians of Jerusalem contended with Peter on account of his intercourse with the Gentiles of Cæsarea. The fierceness of Peter's natural character was now abated: with great meekness he reasoned on the case with his bigotted brethren, and convinced them by the evident proofs of the grace of God being vouchsafed to Gentiles, that it was lawful to have communion with them.* They glorified God, saying, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance to life." Unutterable grace indeed to us, confessed at length and owned by our elder brethren the Jews! David had just reason to say, "Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hands of man."† Even a converted Jew admits with difficulty, that the grace of God may visit a Gentile.

The visits of Paul to Jerusalem seem to have been but short. The body of the Jewish nation sought his destruction; and his Gentile connections and very reserved practice of Mosiacal ceremonies, rendered him no peculiar favourite in the mother-church, though they "could not but glorify the grace of God which was in him."‡ But the Church is not perfect on earth. His next return to Jerusalem was, however, of a popular kind, namely, to convey the alms of Gentile converts to the Jewish Christians oppressed by a "famine, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar."§ His companion to Jerusalem was Barnabas, whose liberality in the beginning had been so eminent. This service being discharged, they both returned to minister to the Gentiles.

The civil power of Judea was now in the hands of Herod Agrippa, a great favourite of the Roman Emperor, a person of considerable talents, and full of that specious virtue, which, in secular annals, would entitle him to great renown. In the Church of Christ he stands a persecutor, and his virtues are, in the strong but just language of Augustine,¶ splendid sins. Yet his persecution was not the effect of a cruel temper. Had the Jews regarded Christianity with a favourable eye, he, at least, would have protected it. But long before this time the general favour of the common people toward the Christians had been dissipated by the active malice of the rulers, and Christ was found to have no lasting friends, but those whom he made so by effectual grace. The first victim of this political persecution

was James the son of Zebedee: he was slain with the sword, the first of the Apostles, who departed from the Church below, to join that which is above.

Finding that the act was popular, Herod attempted to dispatch* Peter also. But God had reserved him for more services; and yet, in all appearance, there was no hope of his preservation. He was imprisoned, and strictly guarded, with a view, after the passover, when the concourse of Jews at Jerusalem was very large, to have him publicly executed. The king pleased himself with the idea of ingratiating himself with his subjects; but the Church has arms, which men of the world understand not, and they were vigorously used on this occasion.

A spirit of earnest persevering prayer was poured on the Church of Jerusalem. The Lord delayed to answer, till the critical moment;—a method not uncommon of exercising the faith, and zeal, and patience of his people. By the miraculous interposition of an angel, Peter, the night before his intended execution, was delivered from prison. At first he imagined that to be done in vision, which was a reality. At length being fully come to himself, and reflecting on what the Lord had done, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, a woman of eminent piety and of some opulence, where many Christians were gathered together in the religious employment of prayer. Those only, who know what the spirit of prayer is, can conceive the vehemence of wrestling, which then engaged Christian hearts. The scene which followed was at once most astonishing, and most pleasing. They hear a person knocking at the door; a young woman named Rhoda comes to hearken; she knows Peter's voice; joy prevents her from opening the gate; she returns to inform the supplicants, that Peter stood before it; they are induced to suspect her of insanity, rather than to believe that their prayers were heard; so slow are even the best to believe the goodness of God. She perseveres in her first assertion; it must then, say they, be his angel.† Peter continues knocking; they open at length; they behold him, and are astonished. Having waved his hand, and brought them to silence, he informs them of the Lord's wonderful interposition in his favour. Go, says he, and shew these things to James, and the brethren. James, who was the Lord's brother, with himself and John had the greatest concern in the government of the mother-church‡ at that time. Peter retires then to a place of concealment.

* Acts xii.

† The idea of the ministry of angels among men was popular with the Jews; possibly these good men might carry it too far.

‡ Gal. ii. 9.

* Acts xi. † 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. ‡ Gal. i. ult.

† Acts xi. toward the end. ‡ Splendidi peccata.

Little did Herod apprehend that his own death should precede that of his prisoner. On a public occasion, in which he appeared in great splendour, he delivered an oration, so pleasing to his audience, "that they shouted, it is the voice of a god, and not of a man." That moment he was smitten with an incurable disease by an angel, because he "gave not God the glory." That pride and ambition, which had gained him the character of a patriot, orator, and statesman, were punished with death by Him, who "seeth not as man seeth;" and he fell a warning to princes not to seek glory in opposition to God.

The next memorable circumstance in the history of the mother-church will deserve our particular attention. This was the first Christian Council. The controversy which occasioned it, involved a subject of vast consequence in real religion.

About twenty years had elapsed since the effusion of the Spirit had commenced; a period of time in which, even in the midst of one of the most wicked nations in the world, in Jerusalem and in its neighbourhood, God had erected his kingdom in the hearts of thousands who had lived in great unanimity and charity, "keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," conscious of their Divine Master's spiritual presence, and rejoicing in hope of his second coming to complete their felicity. They had sustained, in his strength, with much patience, two very severe persecutions, in the former of which a Deacon, in the second an Apostle had sealed the truth with his blood. In an earlier part of this period their holy harmony had been a little interrupted by a secular contention; but this was soon composed. The time was not yet arrived, when those, who called themselves Christians, could so much forget the dignity of their profession, as to contend passionately for worldly things. The present controversy had a more intimate connection with the Christian religion itself, and therefore seemed more likely to disturb the union of men, with whom spiritual objects were the chief ground of concern. The Jews were strongly attached to their own religious national peculiarities. Under the influence of pride, envy, and other evil passions, this disposition supported the spirit of self-righteousness. Nothing could be more contrary to the genius of the Gospel than the attempt of some Christian Jews, who endeavoured to infuse into the Gentile converts an idea of the necessity of circumcision, and of obe-

dience to the whole of the Mosaic ceremonial, in order to salvation. Some of the Pharisees themselves were now real Christians, but they were displeased to see and hear of so many Gentiles admitted into the Christian Church, and regarded by the Apostles as on an equal footing with themselves in the favour of God. Thus were their minds darkened with respect to the article of justification: and, before they were aware, by thus insisting on the necessity of circumcision, they practically averred, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was not sufficient for man's salvation; that the favour of God was to be purchased by human works, in part at least; and that their ritual observances, contributed to their acceptance with God.

This was the first time that the natural pride and ignorance of the human heart, disguised under the pretence of religious zeal, attempted to undermine the simplicity of the faith, by which hitherto Christians had rested with complacency on Jesus alone, had enjoyed peace of conscience, and had been constrained to obedience by love. The Apostles Paul and Barnabas looked on the growing evil with a jealous eye, and after no small fruitless altercation with the zealots, thought it better to refer the full consideration of the question to a council of Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem. And now Paul returned to Jerusalem the third time since his conversion, and about seventeen years after it; and, in his progress with Barnabas, reported the conversion of the Gentiles, which gave great joy to the Christian Jews in general.

At the council, Peter, who was returned to Jerusalem, and since Agrippa's death was no longer molested, opened the debate by observing, that a considerable time ago, God had selected him to preach to the Gentiles, and had blessed his labours with unequivocal success, in purifying their hearts by faith, and in dispensing the Holy Ghost among them, no less than on the Jews. After God himself had thus decided, he said it appeared presumptuous in any person to impose a yoke on the Gentiles, from which the Divine Indulgence had exempted them. He insisted that the yoke itself, especially when laid on the conscience as necessary to salvation, was intolerable: and he concluded, that even they, who still, for charitable and prudential reasons, persisted in the ritual observances, were yet obliged to repose for salvation only on the "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," as well as these Gentiles, who never had observed them at all. This full testimony of Peter was supported by Paul and Barnabas, who gave large proof of the Divine grace vouchsafed to the Gentiles. James, who seems to have been the standing pastor of Jerusalem, con-

* I once for all observe here, that the niceties of chronology make no part of my study in this work. Yet I shall endeavour to attend so much to historical connection, as to be generally right within a few years. This seems sufficient for my purpose, and whoever attends to the second and third chapters to the Galatians, will see, that I cannot err much in this instance.

firm the same argument, by the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeably to Peter's declaration of the mercy of God in visiting the Gentiles. He gave his opinion, that the Gentiles should no longer be molested with notions subversive of the grace of God, and tending to teach them dependance on human works instead of the atonement of Christ for salvation. Only he recommended, that the council should direct them to abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.⁴ For the number of Jews dispersed through Gentile cities, who heard Moses read every Sabbath-day, required these precautions.

A letter was sent according to these views; nor does it appear that there was one dissenting voice in the council. It is remarkable, that the synod used this striking expression of censure against the zealots, they "troubled you with words, subverting your souls." Certainly the charitable Apostles would not so strongly have rebuked a trifling error. Nor is there, I think, any other method of understanding this aright, but on the principle already stated, that the harm did not consist in practising these ceremonies, though virtually abrogated by the death of Christ. For these were practised by the Apostles themselves, constantly by such as lived in Judea, and occasionally by the rest. The real fault was the depending upon them for salvation, in opposition to the grace of Christ. Here the Apostles knew it behoved them to be jealous, that God might be glorified, and souls comforted: and the joy, and consolation, and establishment in the faith,⁵ which ensued amongst the Gentiles, confirms this interpretation.

It is to be feared, that the Church of Jerusalem received not all the benefit, which was to be wished, from the wisdom and charity of the council, though it doubtless would be of service to many. But its most wholesome effects were felt among the Gentiles. The account, which we have in the Epistle to the Galatians leads us to suspect, that the self-righteous spirit had a very deep influence among some members of the Church at Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul was obliged to exercise a particular caution among them, and to confer in private with the pillars of the Church, lest he should give umbrage to the Jewish Christians, and hurt his own usefulness among his countrymen.⁶ In this he acted with equal prudence and charity: yet nothing could induce him to act inconsistently with the faith. To press the Gen-

tile converts to Jewish conformity, appeared to him in this light, as no reasons but those of peace, charity, and prudent expediency could be pleaded for the continuance of such observances even among Jews: and therefore, among Gentiles, who never had been under the yoke, no other construction could be put on the practice, than that it was necessary to salvation, and that the primary doctrine of the Christian religion, the sufficiency of the blood of Christ for pardon of sin, was disbelieved. The same Apostle therefore, who on another occasion circumcised Timothy⁷ because of the Jews in the neighbourhood, he being by the mother's side of Hebrew extraction, now insisted, that Titus, a perfect Gentile, should not be circumcised,⁸ because of false brethren, who had craftily introduced themselves among the Christians, with a view to undermine their dependance on Jesus, and to draw them back to the self-righteousness of Judaism. The liberty of Christ was what he was zealous to support; and he would not, for an hour, allow any self-righteous mixtures, "that the truth of the Gospel might continue with them;" an expression, which throws farther light on the controversy we have reviewed; and shews distinctly, that not circumcision itself, but the dependance on it for salvation in the room of Christ, was the great object of the Apostle's opposition.

He had hitherto found, to his satisfaction, that all his brethren of the Apostolic college had heartily concurred in checking the progress of self-righteousness. But a lamentable instance of human imbecility soon appeared. Peter, after having⁹ taken a social meal with some Gentile converts, afterwards withdrew from their company, on the arrival of certain Jewish zealots, who came to him from James: and thus, for fear of their censure, he durst not keep company with men, whose fellowship he yet inwardly revered, and expected to enjoy in heaven. An error committed by a respectable character is infectious. Other Jews dissembled in a similar way:—even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation, and the truth of the Gospel was in danger of being forsaken on the authority of those, who had hitherto upheld its standard in the world. Such infirmities of the wise and good prove beyond doubt, to whom alone we are obliged for the preservation of Christian truth in the earth. The Lord roused the spirit of Paul on the occasion: he vindicated the truth of the Gospel by an open and manly rebuke of Peter: and a seasonable check was put to the growing torrent of Pharisaism,—that dark but deadly foe of the Gospel,—which, in one form or other, is ever ready to cloud the light of truth, and to sap the foundation of Christian peace and life.

⁴ Though an idol was nothing, and what was offered to it was nothing, yet St. Paul has given solid reasons why Christians should abstain from such meats. Fornication was a sin, concerning the evil of which the heathen converts might be, he apprehended, as yet un-informed; and to abstain from things strangled and from blood, was necessary, in order to have any intercourse with Jews at all.

⁵ Acts xv. 31. and xvi. 5.

⁶ Gal. ii.

⁷ Acts xvi. 5.

⁸ Gal. ii.

⁹ Gal. ii. 12.

St. Paul's fourth visit to Jerusalem is but just mentioned in scripture.^k His fifth was attended with more memorable events. It was seen by the spirit of prophecy, that he would undergo bitter persecution from the infidel Jews; and the guarded kindness, with which he was received by many, even of the believers there, formed no pleasing inducement to him to repeat his visits. But divine charity prevailed in St. Paul's mind over all objections, difficulties, and dangers: he rebuked his friends at Caesarea, who dissuaded him from prosecuting his journey, by professing his readiness "not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus."^l His resignation silenced them: "they said, The will of the Lord be done." On his arrival he went to James, and, in the presence of all the elders, recounted the work of God among the Gentiles. They glorified the Lord, and rejoiced sincerely on the account: but at the same time they expressed what concern it gave them to find, how jealous of Paul the brethren were, having heard a false report of his teaching all the Jews to forsake the Mosaic observances. Doubtless he had not done this: but, he had done what displeased the Jewish zealots: he had insisted on the exemption of Gentiles from the yoke; and men, once out of humour, are disposed to resort to malevolent exaggerations. In this exigency the advice of James was at the same time prudent and charitable, namely, that he should join with four men, who were bound by a Nazarite vow, in the customary services of the temple, till a sacrifice should be offered for each of them. With this Paul concurred; and thus he gave the clearest proof that he was ready to conform both to Jew and Gentile in things indifferent, with a view to promote the salvation of men. A few remarks, suggested by these transactions, shall close this chapter.

1. We see here that really there was no difference of sentiment between Paul and James in religious opinions, as from a few^m expressions in the epistle of the latter, some are glad to insinuate. These two Apostles, and indeed the whole college, were perfectly agreed in their views of the nature of the Gospel.

2 In Peter there evidently was, in one instance, a duplicity of conduct with respect to the Mosaic rites,—in Paul a steady uniformity. He lived as a Jew himself: vows, synagogue-worship, and the various rites of the law he observed, not even sacrifices excepted, on occasion. He could not indeed look on them now in any other light than as branches of a human establishment; since the death of Christ had annulled their divine authority. The establishment itself he

knew was soon to cease by the destruction of Jerusalem. To him and to the rest of the Apostles it appeared more charitable, to submit to the inconveniences of conformity, than to irritate the whole body of the Jews on account of circumstantialia. On this ground pious men in all ages have acted, and those, who have most excelled in Christian fruitfulness, have been most remarkable for their candour. At the same time the inflexible firmness of Paul in vindicating the doctrine of justification, by allowing on no account the circumcision of Gentiles, informs us, where he laid the stress for salvation. This union of candour and firmness in the same person, acting variously in opposite circumstances, has led some writers to accuse him of inconsistency, who seem not to have understood the principles of the controversy. This was the case of Jerome of old. His controversy with Augustine on the subject is yet extant in the Epistles of the latter, whose statement of the affair I think perfectly just; and it is agreeable to the views in which the conduct of the Apostle has now been exhibited.

3. We see here how infinitely important the doctrine of justification is! What excellent fruits it had brought forth" in the Jewish Church, now consisting of many thousands, has been shewn. It appears how naturally the human heart departs from the faith of Christ, before it is aware. The penetrating and zealous spirit of Paul was employed by the divine goodness to uphold still the standard of truth. Many, no doubt, received benefit from his example; but the glory of this Church was now on the decline.

4. The evil of bigotry is no less evident, and how naturally it connects itself with self-righteousness is apparent. An eager stress laid on any rite, or form, or external work whatever, easily thus degenerates. Stedfastness in the faith, and candour, and charity, are, under God, our preservatives against it.

There was little opportunity of trying the effect of the charitable scheme, concerted between the two Apostles, on the minds of Christians, because before the seven days were expired, the malice of the infidel Jews broke out against Paul. St. Luke's narrative, from the twenty-first chapter to the end of his history, is spent on the consequences of this. The cheerfulness, magnanimity, charity, and piety of the Apostle Paul: the convincing force of his reasoning, which caused Felix to tremble, and Agrippa to confess himself almost a Christian: his preservation from Jewish malice by the privilege of Roman citizenship: the perils he underwent by sea and land, till he arrived a

^k Acts xviii. 22.

Acts xxi. 13.

^m James ii. latter part.

ⁿ Acts xxi. 27.

prisoner at Rouse, and his labours for two years in the ministry among them who visited him in his imprisonment: these things are so circumstantially, and, I may justly add, so beautifully related by the sacred writer, that I shall refer my reader to him altogether, especially as neither the history of the mother-church, nor of any other particular Churches, is connected with the account.

The malice of the Jews having failed of its object in Paul by his appeal to Cæsar, would gladly have gratified itself on James. But he, though no Roman citizen, was shielded by the lenity of the Roman government a little longer. His long residence at Jerusalem, where he was stationary at least for the most part, had given him an opportunity, by a blameless life, to abate the prejudice of his unbelieving countrymen, and to extort the tribute of praise from the populace in general. About the year of our Lord sixty, he wrote his Catholic epistle. It is addressed to Jews in general; sometimes he speaks to Christians, sometimes to Infidels, like a person well known, and of considerable influence among both. The covetousness, inhumanity, and persecuting spirit of the nation are described in strong colours; and he writes like one who foresees the speedy desolation which was to overtake them. By the practical turn of his doctrine, by his descanting on the vices of the tongue,^o of partiality to the rich, and of contemptuous treatment of the poor in Christian assemblies,^p and by his direction against vain swearing,^q it is but too evident, that the Church had considerably declined from its original purity and simplicity; and that the crafts of Satan, aided ever by natural depravity, were wearing out apace the precious fruits of that effusion of the Spirit, which has been described. Such is the common course of things in all similar cases, within the like period of about thirty years. The Lord had not however forsaken his Church; though its members were in a persecuted state, and were brought before Jewish magistrates,^r and vexed, so far as the rage of this infuriated nation had power to exert itself. He particularly exhorts them to patience under their trials, and a resignation to the divine will.

About the same time, or a little after, this Church was favoured with the Epistle to the Hebrews, which seems to have been written by St. Paul.^s

As apostacy, partly through the fashionable and natural evil of self-righteousness, and partly through the cruelty of persecution, was the great evil to be feared among them,

he directs them particularly to maintain the Christian faith. He largely and distinctly shews the accomplishment of all Mosaic types in Jesus. His priesthood, sacrifice, and intercession are amply described. The privileges and benefits of his salvation are distinctly stated. He exhorts them to constancy in the simple faith of Christ. He urges them to persevere in supporting their Christian assemblies, from which some^t had declined, probably through fear of persecution. He reminds them of the severities they had patiently undergone after their first illumination, of the compassion which his sufferings had excited among them, and of the cheerfulness with which they had sustained the spoiling of their goods, from the confidence they "had of having in heaven a better and enduring substance." The whole turn of his exhortation shews, that they were in a state of grievous molestation at the time of writing this epistle. And yet from their dulness in divine things, which he so warmly censures,^u it is certain their spiritual taste had declined. The persecution of St. Paul at Jerusalem probably excited a general hostility against the Church. That it did not proceed to blood,^v seems owing to no other cause than the protection of the Roman government. The Apostle is particularly earnest in exhorting them to remember and hold fast the grace of the Gospel, which their first ministers had taught them, and to consider that Jesus Christ was their great object, and that a return to Jewish dependencies would ruin their souls. On the whole, we have here the most glorious views of the Gospel, and the most distinct information of the nature of a true adherence to it; though I see no evidence on the face of the epistle for concluding, that he forbade them that same occasional and prudential compliance with Judaism in external observances, which all the Apostles practised. It was the departure of the HEART from the Lord Jesus, against which he warned them. He dwells not largely on particular duties. He had not lived much among them; and special details of practical matters came better from the pastoral pen of James.

Thus earnestly did these two Apostles instruct and warn a declining Church. But grace has its seasons! God will not always strive with man; yet the use of the epistles will remain, till time shall be no more.

CHAPTER II.

JUDEA AND GALILEE.

THE Holy Land was divided into three provinces, JUDEA, GALILEE, and SAMARIA.

^t Heb. x. 25. ^u Chap. v. 12. ^v Chap. xii. 4.

^o Chap. iii.

^p Chap. ii.

^q Chap. v.

^r Chap. ii. 6.

^s St. Peter, in his second epistle to the Jews, reminds them of St. Paul's letter to them, which, probably, could have been no other than this epistle.

This last was in a situation so peculiar, as to deserve to be considered distinctly. And of the Churches of the two former I have not much more to say, than that their state, by fair analogy, may be estimated from that of the mother-church. Indeed a strong foundation had been laid for their conversion by the ministry of John the Baptist, and by that of our Lord in the days of his flesh. The angel Gabriel had foretold of the son of Zacharias, "that many of the children of Israel he should turn to the Lord their God." Repentance was his theme, and by this he prepared the way of the Lord. Jesus himself condescended in his subordinate capacity of prophet and teacher to pursue the same method, though no regular Churches were yet formed. He promised that the gift of the Holy Ghost should be vouchsafed to his disciples, and we have several intimations,* that a greater degree of success, of purity, of knowledge, and of glory, should attend his religion after he should leave this world, than during his personal ministry.

Judea and Galilee being thus prepared for the Gospel, the blessed tidings began to be spread through them, and to be attended with rapid success, soon after the first persecution which arose concerning Stephen. Those, who had felt the flame of divine love in Jerusalem, being obliged to flee, preached through these regions, and many thousands were converted, as we have seen. The mother-church, no doubt, was the most numerous, but various Churches in the country must have contributed to make up the sum. The small size of Palestine may tempt some to wonder, if many thousands became Christians, how the main body of the nation could yet remain in infidelity. The amazing populousness and fertility of the country accounts for this. The number of populous towns, in Galilee particularly, is astonishing, as appears from Josephus's narrative of the Jewish war. The single town of Gadara, near the lake of Gennezaret, by no means a town of the first magnitude, maintained two thousand swine.† If then the importance of regions be measured by the number of inhabitants, rather than by the extent of ground, this small country might vie perhaps with modern Russia.

Of these Churches the first instruments were not the Apostles themselves, though they doubtless visited them afterwards, and confirmed them. James the son of Zebedee would not confine his labours to Jerusalem, till the time of his martyrdom, no more than the rest of the twelve, if perhaps we except

James the son of Alphaeus, who was the first standing Pastor of Jerusalem.

These Churches, most probably, followed the example of the parent-church, both in its first love and comfortable progress, and also in its unhappy declension. Peter's activity in establishing them was very conspicuous. "The Lord wrought effectually" in him for the conversion of the Jews all along.‡ He passed through all quarters, and visited the places most remote from the capital, such as Lydda, Saron, and Joppa.⁴ In all these places the Spirit of God accompanied his work. It was in this last city that the Lord by him raised Tabitha from the dead. I should scarce have mentioned this miracle, in a work which professes all along to record the ordinary, not the extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost, were not the woman distinguished by "her good works and alms-deeds which she did." All the widows stood by Peter weeping, and shewing the "coats and garments which she had made, while she was with them." Thus had this woman's faith evidenced itself by good works; and the spirit of piety and of prayer had gone hand in hand with that of industrious beneficence. Hail, Tabitha! thou hast the highest glory, and of the most solid kind, which is attainable on earth! But the reader sees how simple and low Christian exploits must appear in the eyes of worldly men. They are not like the swelling deeds of heroes and statesmen, which have hitherto, for the most part, monopolized the historic page. But the persons who are influenced by the Spirit of Christ, with Tabitha, will yet know with whom they would wish to be numbered. The female sex, almost excluded from civil history, will appear perhaps more conspicuous in ecclesiastical. Less immersed in secular concerns, and less haughty and independent in spirit, they seem, in all ages, to have had their full proportion, or more than the other sex, of the grace of the Gospel.

CHAPTER III.

SAMARIA.

THIS country lay in the midst between Judea and Galilee, though distinguished from them both in its polity and religion. The inhabitants possessed a large part of the district, which had belonged to the ten tribes, whom the kings of Assyria had carried into captivity. These conquerors had filled their vacant place with various colonists,⁵ who mixed the worship of Jehovah with their idols, vainly boasted of their relation to Jacob,⁶

* Luke i. 2. * John xiv. and xvi.
 † Let this account, once for all, for the much greater use which I make of the Acts and of the Epistles, than of the four Gospels. These last are indeed inestimable; but their uses are of another kind, and fall not within the plan of this work.

‡ Mark v. 13.

⁴ Gal. ii. 8.
 ⁵ 2 Kings xvii.

⁶ Acts ix.
 † John v. 12.

professed to regard the law of Moses, and despised, or at least depreciated, the rest of the Old Testament. Our Saviour clearly decides the contest, which, for ages, had been carried on between them and the Jews, in favour of the latter.² But though the Samaritan was an idolater in his very foundation, yet in moral practice he appears not worse than the Jew. Both, indeed, were at this time extremely corrupt, and gloried in cherishing an enmity, which forbade them the exercise of common humanity to one another.

The Divine Saviour pitied this people. He visited them himself,³ and some sinners were converted. He made a second attempt,⁴ but the bigotry of the village to which he approached, prevented them from receiving him there, a circumstance, which excited the fiery zeal of the two sons of Zebedee, and gave occasion to our Lord to say, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." He meekly bore the repulse, and went to another village. But the effusions of his kindness toward this unhappy people were now to appear in abundance.

Among the seven deacons the next person to Stephen, in zeal and activity, was Philip. Driven from Jerusalem by the persecution, he was directed to go to the city of Samaria, perhaps to the same city called Sychar, where our Lord had conversed with the woman over Jacob's well. There he preached Christ, and the Gospel entered the hearts of many, so "that there was great joy in that city."⁵ The inhabitants appear to have been a very ignorant simple people, but now that the Spirit of God was poured upon them, none received the Gospel with more cordial pleasure. One effect immediately appeared, which indeed never fails to attend the hearty reception of the Gospel. Superstition and diabolical delusions vanished. A person, named Simon, had deceived this people with sorceries; I dare not say with pretended sorceries: We shall see sufficient proof, before we have done with the apostolical history, that sorcery was a real thing. For a long time they had been infatuated; but Philip's doctrine expelled their regard for these things, and numbers of both sexes were baptized. Simon himself, though a stranger to the nature and power of Christ's religion, was yet convinced, that Christianity in general was true; and this seems the just idea of a mere historical believer.

The Apostles hearing of the happy reception of the Gospel at Samaria, sent down Peter and John, who prayed on the behalf of the people, that the Holy Ghost might be imparted through the imposition of hands. The Spirit was communicated, not only in extraordinary gifts, but also in an effusion of the same holy graces, which had appeared in

Judea. The former were those alone, which attracted the attention of Simon. His avicious heart immediately conceiving the prospect of vast wealth to be acquired, were he once possessed of this supernatural power, he offered the Apostles a sum of money for the communication of the secret. Peter, who saw distinctly both his covetousness and his ignorance, rebuked him in the severest manner, assured him that his heart was wrong altogether, and his state accursed, notwithstanding his baptism and profession of Christianity. At the same time he exhorted him to repent and to seek the divine forgiveness. Here we see how singularly remote the religion of Jesus is from all worldly plans and schemes, and what an awful difference there ever is between a real and a nominal Christian. The conscience of Simon felt the reproof: he begged the Apostles' prayers; but it does not appear that he prayed for himself. Peter and John preached through many Samaritan villages, and then returned to Jerusalem.

The Samaritans, a sort of half Jews,—for they were all circumcised,—being favoured with the same spiritual blessings as the rest, the minds of Christians were prepared to expect a similar extension of heavenly grace to uncircumcised idolaters. And among the wonders of divine love which we have reviewed, these are pleasing circumstances, that Jews and Samaritans, who, for ages, had disagreed in rites, should now be united in Jesus; and while each felt the same obligations to grace, should have learned mutual charity for the first time.

CHAPTER IV.

ETHIOPIA.¹

It is instructive to observe, by what gentle degrees the goodness of God was preparing the way for the general diffusion of his grace in the world. The first Christians, even the Apostles themselves, were by no means disposed to think with any particular compassion of Gentiles, and would scarce have thought of spreading the Gospel beyond the bounds of their own nation, had not the persecution driven many out of Jerusalem. The teachers themselves needed to be taught of God in this part of their office. So helpless is man in divine things, even after he has been favoured with some spiritual light, that by fresh communications alone, he can be

¹ The Ethiopia to which this chapter is confined, seems to be that part of the country, whose metropolis is called Meroe, situated in a large island, encompassed by the Nile and the rivers of Astapus and Astoborra: For in these parts (as the elder Pliny informs us) Queens had a long time governed under the title of Candace. See Cave's Life of Philip.

² John iv. 22.
³ Luke ix. 32.

⁴ John iv.
⁵ Acts viii. 8.

indeed to make any additional improvement. After Philip had finished his work at Samaria, he was, by an extraordinary commission, ordered to travel southward toward the desert. He soon discovered the reason: he fell in with an Ethiopian eunuch, a minister of Candace Queen of the Ethiopians, who had been worshipping at Jerusalem, and was returning home in his chariot. Men, who feel the worth of their souls, will not be unemployed when alone. Their concern for their best interests will operate most powerfully, when they are most disengaged from business. The man was reading the prophet Esaias, and the adorable Providence of God had directed him at that particular time to the fifty-third chapter, which gives so clear a description of Christ crucified. Philip asked him, if he understood what he was reading. The man confessing his ignorance, desired Philip to come and sit with him. The Evangelist took the opportunity of expounding to him the Gospel from the passage he was then reading, which at once lays open the guilty and the miserable state of man, his recovery only by the grace of Jesus Christ, the nature, end, and efficacy of his death and resurrection, and justification before God by the knowledge of the same Jesus and by his merits. The Ethiopian's mind had been prepared for the doctrine: he had been at the pains to attend Jewish instructions, the best then to be had in the world, except the Christian, which he now heard, for the first time; nor had the scandalous wickedness of the Jewish nation hindered him from attending that worship, which he believed to be of divine origin. The ignorance of his own country suited not even the weakest and most glimmering light of a serious mind. His case is an encouragement for men, however ignorant and mistaken at present, to seek earnestly to God, for he will take care that they shall find. The man felt himself guilty and wicked, and the views of the prophetic chapter before us, laid open by the preacher, discovered to him the remedy, which it pleased God so powerfully to apply to his heart, that as soon as they came to a certain water, he desired to be baptized. Philip assured him that there was no impediment, if he was sincere in the faith of Christ. On which he professed his belief, that the Jesus of Nazareth, whom Philip had preached to him, was indeed the Son of God prophesied of by Isaiah, and that he answered the character of Saviour there given to him. Philip then baptized the Ethiopian, who, though his instructor was, by the Spirit of the Lord, immediately taken from him, went on his way into his own country rejoicing.^m Doubtless this joy had a solid and powerful cause; and if

this case be compared with that of the three thousand first converts, and both of them with the doctrine of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, conversion will appear to be a spiritual internal work, humbling men for sin, and comforting them with forgiveness by Christ. The nominal profession, with which great numbers of persons content themselves, may seem to fit them for little else, than to disgrace Christianity by their practice.

It is impossible that the Ethiopian, thus powerfully enlightened and rejoicing in God, could be silent, when he returned home. His influence and character would at least secure to him a respectful attention from some of his countrymen; and thus the Gospel, most probably, was first planted in Ethiopia. But we have no more scriptural light on the subject.

CHAPTER V.

CÆSAREA.

THE great mixture of Jews and Gentiles in some of the extreme parts of the Holy Land or its neighbourhood, afforded a providential opportunity for the gradual illumination of the latter, for the abatement of Jewish bigotry, for the demonstration of divine grace in the salvation of all sorts of men, and for the union of Christian hearts. Thus we find that a Church was planted at Tyre, another at Ptolemais,ⁿ places which must have abounded with Gentiles. But Cæsarea affords the most remarkable instance of the observation just now made. It was the residence of the Roman Governor, and was so situated in the confines of Syria and Judea, that it was a matter of doubt to which region it ought to be assigned. And the final determination of this question in favour of the Syrians is mentioned by Josephus, as one of the immediate causes of the war, which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem. This circumstance shews the great importance of this city, and the strong interest which both parties had in it.

Philip, after a laborious journey from Azotus, preaching in all the cities, through which he passed, settled at length in Cæsarea. Here he was stationary for many years.^o We find him, toward the conclusion of the period of about thirty years, which takes in the history of the Acts, still fixed in the same place, with four virgin daughters, where he entertained St. Paul in his last journey to Jerusalem. I can no more conceive Philip to have been idle and unfruitful all this time, than James to have been so at Jerusalem. A Church, mixed of Jews and Gentiles

^m Acts viii.

ⁿ Acts xxi.
^o Acts viii. 40. all compared with xxi. 8.

would naturally be formed under so zealous a pastor, whose observation of the grace of God in the case of the eunuch, must have opened his mind to an affectionate reception of Gentile converts.

Indeed the abuse, which the malignant pride of the Jews had made of the Mosaic prohibition of intercourse with Gentiles, was a great bar to the extension of the gospel. They refused to keep company with foreigners, and seem to have looked on them as devoted to destruction. The Apostles themselves were, as yet, under the power of the same bigotry, till a vision from heaven instructed Peter, as he was praying on the house-top at Joppa, that he ought not to call any man common or unclean.* By this he was prepared for the work which the Lord was immediately assigning him. The Holy Spirit suggested to him that three men were at that time inquiring for him, and directed him to go with them; "for I have sent them."[†] Peter was soon informed by the men, that they had been sent to him from Cæsarea by Cornelius, a Roman centurion there, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his family, gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway; who had been warned from God by an holy angel to send for him.—Peter lodged the three men that night: two of them were household servants, and the third—rare character!—a devout soldier, who waited on the centurion continually.

On the next day Peter went with them, but had the precaution to take with him six Jewish Christians from Joppa as witnesses of his proceedings. The following day they entered Cæsarea, and came into the house of Cornelius, who had called together his kinsmen and near friends, with that charity for their souls, which fails not to influence the minds of those, who have real charity for their own. On the entrance of Peter he falls down and worships. Peter corrects his mistaken devotion. Cornelius informs him, that having been particularly engaged in fasting and prayer, he was assured by an angel that his prayers and alms were acceptable to God; and that he had obeyed the divine direction in sending for him. Peter now preached the gospel to the company, frank-

ly owning, that he was at length fully convinced, that God was no respecter of persons; but that he equally regarded Jew and Gentile, whoever the person was that "feared God, and wrought righteousness." On this broad basis of encouragement, he was enabled to preach to them the good news of forgiveness of sins by Jesus Christ, whose history they knew, though they did not understand the nature of his doctrine. He directed them now to receive that doctrine cordially for their peace with God. The perfect holiness and the supernatural works of Jesus, he observed, demonstrated him to be no impostor, but sent of God unquestionably; that he himself and the other Apostles were witnesses of Christ's resurrection, and had received a commission from him to preach to the people, and to urge men's acceptance of him here, if ever they expected to be welcomed by him, when he should judge the quick and dead at his second coming; and that all the prophets had testified, that whoever placed his confidence for salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, should receive remission of sins.

Few words suffice, where God himself powerfully works. The whole company were converted to God. The Holy Ghost, both in an extraordinary and in an ordinary way, sealed the Apostle's sermon. The Jewish brethren were astonished to find Gentiles put on an equal footing with Jews, Peter, after observing how unreasonable it would be to deny baptism to persons who had received the Holy Ghost, no less than themselves, baptized the whole company; and at their desire spent a few days with them, to instruct them farther in Christian principles; and then left them to the care of Philip, whose character at Cæsarea would, probably, from this time increase in public esteem.

A remark or two on this important transaction will be proper.

1. The grace of God acts very variously in converting sinners. There are considerable shades of difference in the cases of Saul, of the Eunuch, and of Cornelius. The preaching of the gospel found the first a determined enemy, the second an ignorant inquirer, the third a regenerate person already, though with no more than the Old Testament-light. But to all these different cases, the doctrine itself is the same; and the work of God in humbling man for his sins, and leading him to Christ alone for justification, is the same also.

2. How necessary is it, that the way of peace by Christ alone be distinctly explained and understood! Cornelius, with an enlightened mind and a tender conscience, unless he had understood the doctrine of forgiveness by the blood of the Redeemer, would never have found peace of conscience.

† Acts x.

* The proper personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost, and the unlimited subjection due to him from Christian pastors, and, of course, from all Christians, are amply deducible from this and various similar passages in the Acts of the Apostles.

† Much has been written concerning two sorts of Proselytes to the Jewish religion, circumcised ones, and incomplete ones, called Proselytes of the Gate. Two learned critics, Dr. Lardner and Dr. Doddridge, seem to have shown, however, that the latter had no existence. Cornelius was a Gentile altogether, and was treated as such by the Jews, though from his pious attention to the Jewish religion he must have been at least a Proselyte of the second sort, if any ever were so. In that case it seems difficult to conceive, why any Jew should have made such a difficulty of conversing with persons of this description.

Imperfection still attending his best actions, he must have remained miserable in his spirit. The doctrine of forgiveness, accompanied by the Holy Spirit, brought him at once to a peace before unknown. How careful should we be to understand this doctrine aright! how zealous, in proportion to our ability, to transmit the precious jewel to posterity!

... 3. How narrow are the hearts of men! how circumscribed the charity even of the best! With difficulty even Christian Jews are brought to admit as brethren the gentile converts. Self-righteousness is natural to mankind. That God should receive as his children idolatrous gentiles, as well as religious Jews, provokes the pride of narrow-minded selfish men, who have long been accustomed to consider themselves as the peculiar favourites of heaven.

CHAPTER VI.

ANTIOCH AND SOME OTHER ASIATIC CHURCHES.

We have not yet seen all the good effects which Providence brought out of Stephen's persecution. Though the Apostles thought it their duty to continue to water the flocks of Judea and Galilee, and to look on Jerusalem as a sort of central metropolis to them all, they encouraged the inferior pastors, who fled from the rage of persecution, to disseminate the gospel in Gentile regions. Damascus, we have seen, reaped the benefit of this dispensation, and so did Tarsus. Some travelled as far as Phenice, Cyrus, and Antioch, still preaching only to Jews. At length certain Cypriot and Cyrenian Jews ventured to break through the pale of distinction: and at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, they preached the Lord Jesus to the Gentiles. The Greek language here prevailed, and, on this account, the inhabitants were called Grecians, being the descendants of a Macedonian colony, planted there by the successor of Alexander. And now the Lord, willing to overcome effectually the reluctances of self-righteous bigotry, attended their ministry with remarkable success. The idolaters felt the renovating power of the gospel, and in great numbers turned to the Lord. The mother-church hearing of this, sent Barnabas, whose piety and charity were renowned, to carry on and propagate a work, which required more labourers. His benevolent heart was feasted with the prospect; and the reality of salvation by the grace of Christ thus exemplified in persons, who had hitherto been involved in pagan

darkness, was evidenced in a manner which, till then, had never been known before: Finding many converts, he exhorted them to perseverance; and the addition of believers was still so large, that he began to look out for a coadjutor. He sought for Saul, who was then labouring at Tarsus perhaps with no great success: we are told of none at least; "for a prophet is not honoured in his own country;" and he brought him to Antioch. This populous city employed them a whole year. Here Christian societies were regularly formed, consisting, in a great measure, of Gentiles. And here the followers of Christ were first called Christians. It is not probable, that they would give themselves that name. The terms BROTHERN, ELECT, FAITHFUL, SAINTS, were the names which they would rather approve. The name of Christian seems to have been given by their adversaries. It is now a term of honour: at that time a more opprobrious one could scarcely be thought of by the learned and the polite. Were a man allowed to possess many good qualities; "but he is a Christian," would have been deemed more than a counterbalance to them all. And other terms invented by the malevolence of unregenerate men, in different ages, to stigmatize the same sort of persons, have produced, by the bare sound, similar effects on prejudiced minds.

The faith of the Antiochians was signally operative. Warmed with the love of Christ, and rejoicing in the prospect of heavenly treasures, they cheerfully contributed to the relief of the poor Christians in Judea, distressed by a famine. A large extension of Christ's kingdom in any place, naturally calls together a large number of pastors. It is pleasant indeed to labour among the faithful, encircled with sincere friends. It is not every real saint, who has the fortitude and charity to quit so agreeable a scene, for the sake of breaking up fresh ground. How much longer these teachers would have remained at Antioch, if left to themselves, we know not. But the Holy Ghost now selected Barnabas and Saul for other labours. They obeyed the call; and Seleucia in the neighbourhood was their first destination. At this port they found a convenient passage to the fertile and pleasurable Island of Cyprus. Methinks the evil spirits, who there supported the religious rites and the sensual practices of the devotees of Venus, began to tremble for this capital scene of their dominions.

From Salamis, the eastern point of the Island, to Paphos the western, they spread the glad tidings of the gospel. In this last place they found Elymas, a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet, in company with Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor of the Island, a man of sense and candour, who sent for

Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. The sorcerer endeavoured to prevent the good effects of their labours; till Paul, full of holy indignation at his diabolical malice, was enabled miraculously to strike him blind for a season. Sergius was astonished, we are told, "at the doctrine" of the Lord,¹ and commenced a Christian from that hour.

The two Apostles sailed now to the adjoining continent, and arrived at Perga in Pamphylia. And here John Mark, who had thus far attended them as minister, left them and returned to Jerusalem. It was, perhaps, more agreeable to him to profess and practise Christianity at home with his mother and friends, than to expose himself to heathens. Even then, traces of the love of the world were to be seen among Christians.

Pisidia, lying to the north of Pamphylia, was the next scene. Here was another Antioch; and the Apostles on the Sabbath-day attended the Jewish synagogue. After the usual reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers gave them a friendly invitation to exhort the people, which Paul embraced with his usual zeal. His sermon is much of the same strain with those of Peter and of Stephen, tending to beget in the hearers a conviction of sinfulness, and to give testimony to Jesus, concluding with a remarkably plain declaration of the grand doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus only, and a solemn warning against the dreadful consequences of hardness of heart, and of contempt of the Divine message. The Gentiles, powerfully impressed with the news, desired to hear more of the subject the next Sabbath. Many Jews and proselytes were converted; and the whole city almost came on the next Sabbath-day to hear.² The sight was too much for the envy of the infidel Jews, who opposed Paul with all their might. The two Apostles boldly assured them, that though it was their duty to carry the news of salvation to the Jews first, yet as they despised God's Gift of Eternal Life, it would now be offered to the Gentiles, agreeably to the glorious prophecy of Isaiah,³ where the experimental influence of the gospel on Gentile hearts is clearly described. The Pagans, not so proud as the Jews, felt that they had no righteousness to plead before God, thankfully embraced the gospel, and believed in great numbers.

Pisidia was now full of the gospel; and the Apostles proceeded with vast success, till a persecution, stirred up by the Jews,

induced some self-righteous women of rank, in conjunction with the magistrates, to drive them out of their coasts. From thence they came to Iconium, the northern extremity of the country; and the disciples whom they left, though harassed with persecution, were yet "filled with joy and the Holy Ghost." The internal consolation of their religion supported their souls. In Iconium the two Apostles continued a long time, and delivered the message of divine reconciliation with much freedom and energy, to the conversion of a great multitude both of Jews and Gentiles. The unbelieving Jews⁴ exerted their usual malevolence, and filled the Gentiles with the strongest prejudices against the Christians. In truth, their conduct, though by no means uncommon, affords a dreadful instance of human depravity. It cannot be denied, that those Jews must in religious knowledge have far exceeded the idolatrous inhabitants of Iconium. They held the Unity of the Godhead; they worshipped him in their synagogue; they heard his precepts from Sabbath to Sabbath out of the law of Moses and the prophets. They must have known thus far, that the Messiah was foretold in the latter, and they could not but be acquainted with their duty both to God and man in many respects by means of the former. Yet so unreasonable are they, as to labour to prevent their pagan neighbours from being instructed in any thing that deserved the name of religion, and to persecute with unceasing acrimony two of their own countrymen, who agreed with them in the profession of the worship of the one living and true God. Of so little influence is what some call the "Unitarian" religion, if it be UNCONNECTED with the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. Persons, who make THAT the whole of their religion, can, it seems, rather see mankind remain buried in the depths of the most senseless idolatry in worship, and of vicious profligacy in life, than to turn over to the real Christian religion, to the hearty renunciation of their own righteousness, and to a humble dependence on the atoning blood of Jesus! The preaching of Paul and Barnabas excited a variety of speculations in this city. The Gentiles were divided; and part ranged themselves with the Jews, and part with the Apostles. But the former had the advantage for the present, because they had the arms,—which Christian soldiers cannot use—of violence and persecution.

The Apostles, aware of their designs, fled into Lycaonia, a country to the east of Pisidia; and there preached the gospel, particularly in Lystra and Derbe. In the former of these places, a poor cripple, who never had had the use of his feet, heard Paul

¹ Acts xiii. 12. The expression is remarkable, but has a peculiar propriety. A mere historical believer would have been astonished at the miracle merely. Sergius, a true convert, who entered into the holy nature of the gospel by a spiritual perception, is astonished "at the doctrine."

² Acts xiii. 44.

³ 49th Chap.

⁴ Acts xlv.

with the most respectable attention, and was so far wrought upon already in his mind, as to believe, that there was virtue in the name of Jesus Christ to heal him. To confirm him in his yet infant views of the Christian religion, to attest the truth, and to convince men that Jesus was both able and willing to save, Paul was enabled by a word to restore the man to the full use of his limbs. Immediately these poor idolaters concluded, that the gods were come down to them in the likeness of men. Through this whole country of Asia Minor, the Greek literature, and with it the numerous fables of Hellenistic vanity, abounded. They had heard of Jupiter and Mercury particularly as visiting mankind; and now Barnabas, as the elder perhaps, and more majestic figure of the two, must, they conceived, be Jupiter; and Paul, as the more eloquent speaker, must be Mercury, the classical god of eloquence. The priest of Jupiter brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and, together with the people, would have done sacrifice to the Apostles. It was a grievous circumstance; but our grief and regret is mitigated, when we reflect that one of the finest opportunities was given to Paul and to Barnabas of demonstrating the spirit of real godliness. However pleasing it might be to corrupt nature to receive the idolatrous* homage of a deluded people, nothing could be more abhorrent from the nature of the gospel itself, and from the humble character of its teachers. They could not bear the sight: they rent their clothes; and ran in among the people, and expostulated with them on the absurdity of their conduct; assuring them that they were no more than frail men like themselves, and that their intention in preaching to them was, to turn them from these vanities to the living God, who formerly indeed had left all nations to follow their own ways, but now had sent his servants to preach a method of salvation from such idolatries. That the worship of false gods was execrable; the constant benefits of Providence calling for thankfulness, and pointing out the Supreme Creator to the consciences of men. Thus faithfully did they preach conviction of sin to the Lycaonians, and with difficulty prevent the actual performance of the sacrifice, which would have given them more pain than the persecution that followed.

The fickle multitude, who had so recently been even idolatrously attached to Paul and Barnabas, were soon persuaded by some Jews, who came from Antioch and Iconium, to harbour the worst opinion of them; and

doubtless the dislike of secular glory, which these excellent Apostles, with a truly Christian spirit, shewed on all occasions, would not a little contribute to increase this alienation of mind. In a tumult Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city, as a dead corpse; and while the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city, miraculously restored, it may seem: and he departed the next day with Barnabas to Derbe. There many were converted; and the persecuting spirit intermitting, they visited again, in circuit, the regions of Pisidia and Lycaonia, encouraging the disciples to persevere in the faith of Jesus in confidence of divine support, and in full expectation of the kingdom of heaven, into which real Christians must not expect to enter without much tribulation.

They now ordained some of the brethren to minister in every Church, and devoutly recommended both pastors and flocks to the care of that gracious Lord on whom they believed: Solemn fasting and prayer were used on this occasion. Returning through Pamphylia, they preached again at Perga, and from Attalia sailed to the great Antioch, whence they had been, by the prayers of the Church, recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled.

Here they remained a considerable time previous to their attendance at the council of Jerusalem, after which they returned to the same Church in company with Judas and Silas, who, with authority from the mother-church, confirmed them in the liberty of the gospel, in conjunction with many other teachers. The Christians of Antioch walked now in genuine consolation, and while they dared to rest on Christ alone, they practised good works in a filial spirit. Thankful for the assistance of Judas and Silas, they dismissed them to the Apostles who had sent them.* Silas, however, loved his situation, and remained in the service of the Gentiles.

Some days after Paul proposed to Barnabas a second circuitous visit of the Asiatic Churches. Barnabas, fond of Mark his nephew, proposed to take him with them. Paul, remembering his former desertion, thought him unfit for the work. On which side there was more blame in this contest may be hard to determine. Probably both were too positive; but to us at this distance of time Paul's view of the question seems the more just. The consequence was a separation between these two Christian leaders; and it does not appear that they ever saw one another after, though it ought not to be doubted, but that, on the whole, their mutual esteem and regard continued: the best men are but men. The progress of the

* The historical reader can scarcely fail to contrast with this behaviour of the Apostles the ambitious arts of Jesuit missionaries, and to regret the want of a similar piety and integrity in a late celebrated naval commander in a scene of trial of the same kind, which happened a little before his lamented catastrophe.

gospel was not, however, retarded. Barnabas sailed with Mark to Cyprus, and here he is dismissed from the sacred memoirs. Paul took with him Silas, having the recommendation of the brethren to the grace of God, which would lead one to conclude, that the Antiochians preferred his cause to that of Barnabas. He now went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

In Lycaonia he found the pious Timothy, whom he took as an associate, and confirmed the Gentile converts every where in Christian liberty: Thus the churches were established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

CHAPTER VII.

GALATIA.

THE love of God, where it rules in an ardent degree, is insatiable. The Apostle's heart is not content with the trophies already erected in many parts of Asia Minor. As the miser thinks no acquisitions great, while any prospects of farther gain are still open to his view, so Paul could not with complacency rest in the attainments already made, while so much ground still lay before him, to the north and to the west, in the hands of Satan. He travelled throughout Phrygia and Galatia.^a The plantation of the churches in the former country will afterwards engage our attention; the latter, whose history in point of time is much sooner concluded in sacred story, will be now most conveniently exhibited. The Epistle written to that Church affords us almost the only materials we have; but little as they are, they are inestimable. I am entirely convinced by Dr. Lardner,^c that this was an early Epistle, and by no means dated from Rome, as the subscription at the end of the Epistle intimates. Nor is this the only place in which those subscriptions, which the unlearned reader should know make no part of the Apostolical writings, deceive us. The people of this country received the gospel in great numbers, inasmuch that several churches were planted through the district. They understood St. Paul's doctrine, and received it in its true sense, namely, that justification before God is attainable only by faith in Christ crucified. He clearly laid before them the riches of divine grace. And they had so deep an impression of the truths, which he taught, and felt so much of their energy, that they seemed as it were to see the Son of God crucified among them:^d they received the promised Spirit of adoption, by which they rejoiced

in God as their Father,^e and they cheerfully suffered much persecution for the name of Christ.^f Before this, they had lived in the darkest idolatry; for these churches were formed almost, if not entirely, of Gentiles.^g The true God was made known to them, and Unitarianism, of itself unable to emancipate men from sin, as the case of the Jews evinced, was with them attended with the distinct knowledge and lively faith of Jesus.

What proves the divine taste of this people was, that no disadvantage in the circumstances of the delivery of the gospel operated with them to its prejudice. Some remarkable infirmity this great man was afflicted with;—what it was precisely we are no where told;—but it presented something contemptible in the eyes of profane persons. And it is no small proof of the Galatians being much humbled and awakened in their minds by the Spirit of God, that this circumstance lessened not at all their regard to the Apostle or to his message. "They received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus."^h They confessed the blessedness, which they felt on account of the gospel, and were ready to give even the most painful proofs of their affection to him. In all this we see, what the gospel is, what it does for men who truly understand and embrace it in an humble heart, what was St. Paul's manner of preaching, and how different a thing Christianity then appeared from the frigid speculations which in modern times, bear that name.

But soon after Paul had left them with the most pleasing hopes of their spiritual growth, he was astonished to hear of a change for the worse, which took place among them. Some Jews, who were either their own countrymen, or who had lately arrived at Galatia from other parts of Asia Minor where Paul had laboured, took pains to pervert them. They made no attempts, indeed, to unsettle their minds in the views of the unity of the Godhead, and the principal facts of Christianity; nor did they endeavour to draw them back to the worship of idols. They neither formally denied the atonement of Christ, nor persuaded the people to desert from Christian worship. Yet was it another gospel, though it deserved not the name of gospel,ⁱ to the love of which they seduced them. They assured them, that they could not be saved without circumcision, and prevailed on them to Judaize so far, as to observe the rites of Moses in various instances.^k They took pains to estrange them from Paul, and to draw them over to themselves, and to a worldly spirit of conformity, loving to appear fair in the

^a Acts xvi. 6.
^d Gal. iii. 1.

^c See his Supplement.

^e Gal. iv. 6.
^f Gal. iv. 8.
^g Gal. i. 6, 7.

^h Gal. iii. 4.
ⁱ Gal. iv. 14.
^k Gal. iv. 10.

eyes of men, and pretending to be zealous for good works, while their real view was to avoid the persecution, which attended the cross of Christ.¹ To give the better effect to their insinuations, they instilled into them disrespectful ideas of Paul as though he were far inferior to the other Apostles: and, as it seems, they represented the mother-church of Jerusalem, with the college of Apostles there, as coinciding with themselves in doctrine.

Thus the self-righteous poison, which first issued from Jerusalem, was brought into this distant province, where the ignorance and simplicity of the people, unacquainted with Jewish modes and habits, gave it the freest room to operate. These false teachers still called themselves Christians, and the mischief which they introduced, may be deemed at first sight no great one. So, I doubt not, some fashionable perversions of evangelical truth at this day, of a similar kind, appear to many to be of no great consequence. I am not, however, to disguise that this Galatian delusion appears strongly to resemble the perversions to which I allude. I have represented things as they appear to me from the epistle. The great evil, lurking under all this art and zeal, was the adulteration of the faith of Jesus, the sole author of our salvation. In no epistle does the Apostle speak so sharply, or express himself so vehemently. His exhortation and rebuke came warm from a charitable heart, just after the reception of the disagreeable tidings. He professes himself astonished at the defection of the Galatians from Christ; and execrates any man or even angel, who should preach any other way of salvation. If such a person still call himself a Christian, and hold the historical facts of the gospel, the case is not altered for the better; the deception only passing more current on that account.² He asserts, that if they mixed circumcision, or any work of the law with Christ in the article of justification, Christ would be of no effect to them.³ He must be their whole Saviour, or he would profit them nothing; law and grace in this case being quite opposite. He marks the mere worldly nature of the doctrine they were embracing: "it would make them bigotted Jews indeed, proud, self-righteous, void of the love of God and man," and no better in their spiritual state than they were while idolaters.⁴ Thus they would lose all the liberty of the gospel, and be mere slaves in religion, like all unconverted persons, who in reality are self-righteous, and devoid of holy principle. He points out to them the peculiar nature of the gospel, as perfectly distinct from any thing that man in his depraved state is apt to teach

or ready to embrace. In the historical part of the epistle he vindicates his own Apostolical character, inculcates throughout, in all possible variety of language and with his usual copiousness both of clear argument and strong diction, the all-important article of justification, and presses the necessity of continuing in it, in order to be benefited by it. Otherwise we make Christ the minister of sin, or of condemnation: we build again what we have destroyed; and, as far as in us lies, make him to have died in vain. He appeals to their own experience of the happy fruits of the gospel, which they had felt internally, and represents himself as travelling in birth for them, till Christ be formed in them. He expresses himself dubious of their condition, and desirous of visiting them, that he might adapt his language to their perilous situation. He wishes that their evil advisers were cut off, so mischievous were they to souls; and assures them, that the divine vengeance would overtake those that troubled them. He informs them, that the persecution, which he himself endured, was on account of this very doctrine. That it was that stirred up the enmity of the human heart; and this doctrine being lost, the gospel becomes a mere name, and Christianity is lost in the group of common religions.

It will be proper for us to bear in mind the Apostle's reasonings on this subject, and to apply them to every period of church-history; since it is evident, that the rise or fall of this great Christian article, must determine the vigour or decline of true religion in all ages. He neglects not however to inculcate in his usual manner the necessity of good works, as the just fruits and evidences of a real Christian state;⁵ and he particularly encourages them to works of mercy, attended with a patient and cheerful prospect into eternity, and animated with genuine charity.⁶

There is reason to hope, that the best effects were produced by the epistle. No very long time after, the Apostle again visited these Churches, and went over the whole country, strengthening "all the disciples."⁷ This is the substance of what I can collect from Scripture concerning the history of this Church,—except a single hint in another epistle,⁸ in which he recommends to the Corinthians to use the same plan for the relief of the poor saints, which he had suggested to the Galatians. From the influence which he hence appears to have had in Galatia, it is probable, that the Judaical perversion was overcome.

¹ Chap. v. toward the end.
² Acts xviii. 23.

³ Chap. vi.
⁴ 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

⁵ Chap. vi. 12. ⁶ Chap. I.
⁷ Chap. v. ⁷ Chap. vi. toward the end.
⁸ Chap. v. ⁸ Chap. iv. 9.

CHAPTER VIII.

PHILIPPI.

THE dispensation of the gospel is doubtless the greatest blessing that can be vouchsafed to any country. But the times and the seasons God hath reserved to himself. Even in this sense salvation is of grace; and divine providence alone orders and appoints, that the gospel shall be preached here or there, as he pleases. Paul and Silas, if left to themselves, in their progress to the west, would have evangelised Pergamus or Asia propria, and Bithynia,* but were prevented by special intimations of the Holy Spirit. They came now to Troas,—so called from its being the place, or near the place, where old Troy had stood, by the sea-coast,—uncertain whether they should go next, and perhaps little apprehensive, that God, now for the first time, was introducing his gospel into Europe. A nightly vision, in which a Macedonian intreated Paul to come over into his country and help them, determined at once their destination. They sailed from Troas to the island of Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis, a Macedonian sea-port, whence, through the gulf of Strymon, they came to Philippi, the first city of that part of Macedonia, which they would meet with in their way from Neapolis. So I understand St. Luke's expression *Παύλος*; for Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia. The city of Philippi, though originally Macedonian, and so named from Philip the father of Alexander, was then a Roman colony, inhabited by Roman citizens, and regulated by Roman laws and customs. The region, in which it stood, had been renowned for constituting the third of the four great monarchies under the arms of Alexander, and the place itself had been, something more than half a century ago, the scene of a famous battle, between two Roman parties engaged in a civil war. Neither of those seasons would have been at all convenient for the gospel. The present was a scene of tranquillity and order under the Roman government: and Macedonia, though now only a Roman province, was going to be the subject of transactions infinitely more noble than those, which adorn the history of its greatest princes.

The appearances on their arrival did not promise any thing remarkable. They spent a few days at first with little prospect of success. They found a few Jews there, who used on the Sabbath-day to frequent an oratory out of the city by the river-side: and some women, religiously disposed, resorted thither. It was the constant method of the

Apostles to join themselves to Unitarians, wherever they could find them, as the first opening for the gospel of Christ. They did so on this occasion, and spake to the women. One of them was Lydia, a person of some property. Her heart the Lord opened, that "she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul." She was baptized with her family; and with affectionate importunity she prevailed on the Apostle and his companions to make her house their home in Philippi. Here we have the beginnings of the Philippian church; but the conversion was sound and stable, and the progress of Lydia in the divine life seems of the same kind as that of Cornelius. Vexed at the prospect, Satan employed a young woman possessed with a spirit of Python to bring the gospel into contempt, if possible. She constantly followed the Christian preachers, and bore them the most honourable testimony. Paul was grieved, as being fully sensible of the ill effect, which a supposed union between Christ and Python^w must occasion in the minds of men. He was at length enabled miraculously to eject the demon.

The proprietors of the young woman, who had made a traffic of her oracular powers, finding that she was dispossessed of the demon, wreaked their vengeance on Paul and Silas, and by slanderous accusations induced the magistrates to scourge them severely, and to commit them to prison. The jailer thrust them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks.

In this situation, distressing indeed, and in the eyes of many ridiculous, these two servants of God, at midnight, though oppressed with pain and hunger and every disagreeable circumstance, were yet enabled to pray and sing praises to God. So powerful are the consolations of the Holy Ghost, and so much did the love of Christ constrain them! And now the Lord caused a great earthquake, which opened all the doors of the prison, and loosed every one's bonds. The jailer awaking, in his first trepidation, by a practice which I wish had been creditable among pagans only, was going to rush into eternity. Paul kindly assured him, that none of the prisoners had escaped. And now being struck with horror at the thought of the world to come, to which he had been hastening in all his guilt, and being divinely convinced of his danger, he came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and asked what he must do to be saved. The answer was plain and direct. Why do any persons who call themselves Christian ministers

^w The very term leads me to apprehend, that the oracular work of the Python Apollo among the pagans had something diabolical in it; and the story before us demonstrates the reality of such delusions, and that human fraud and sagacity alone are not sufficient to account for them.

* Acts xvi. 7.

ever give any other? "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." They then instructed him and his household in the nature of the gospel, and opened to him the doctrine of forgiveness of sins by the blood of Christ. His conversion appears evidently of the same kind, as that of the three thousand at Jerusalem. He was humbled for his sins, and he received pardon by faith in Jesus. His ready submission to baptism, his affectionate treatment of those, who had just before been the objects of his severity, and his joy in the Lord, demonstrated, that he was turned from Satan to God.—His whole family shared with him in the same blessings.

In the morning the magistrates sent an order for the dismissal of the prisoners. But Paul thought it not inconsistent with Christian meekness, to demand from them an apology for their illegal behaviour to Roman citizens; for such it seems Silas was, as well as Paul. The magistrates, alarmed, came personally to make concessions, which were easily accepted. Being dismissed from prison, they entered into Lydia's house, comforted the disciples, and left Philippi for the present.

Some years after, the Apostle again visited the Philippians, and found them still in a flourishing state. He always took a peculiar pleasure in this Church; and, in his epistle written from Rome, he thanks God for their sincere fellowship in the gospel from the beginning. He expresses his expectation of liberty, and of being enabled to see them again, and exhorts them to bear patiently the persecutions to which they were exposed, as an evidence of the divine favour.*

Liberality was a shining virtue among these converts. They had sent once and again to his relief at Thessalonica.† And now they had sent Epaphroditus to Rome, to minister to his wants. A dangerous illness had brought that disciple to the borders of the grave. Upon his recovery he was afflicted to think of the distress, which the news of his sickness must have brought on the minds of the Philippians. Paul was therefore the more anxious to send him back. The sensibility of that love, with which the Holy Ghost had influenced all concerned in this affair, is finely described in this part of the epistle.‡ The Apostle, toward the close of it, even exults in the pleasure which the charity of these disciples gave him; and he assures them, that his God would "supply all their need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He warns them however against the dangers of seduction. Judaising teachers desired to pervert them. He re-

minds them, therefore,* of his own simple dependence on the Lord Jesus, though he had fairer pretensions than most men to self-righteousness; and with tears in his eyes declares, that, even then, many pretended Christians walked like enemies of the cross of Christ.

Such was the work of God at Philippi. A considerable number of persons, once worshippers of idols, devoted to the basest lusts, and sunk in the grossest ignorance, were brought to the knowledge and love of the true God, and to the hope of salvation by his Son Jesus. In this faith and hope they persevered amidst a world of persecutions, steadily brought forth the fruits of charity, and lived in the joyful expectation of a blessed resurrection.

CHAPTER IX.

THESSALONICA.

Or Amphipolis and Apollonia, the next cities of Macedonia through which St. Paul passed, nothing particular is recorded. But at Thessalonica another European Church was formed inferior in solid piety to none in the primitive times. This city had been rebuilt by Philip of Macedon, and had its name from his conquest of Thessaly. Here Paul followed his usual practice of preaching first to the Jews in their synagogue, and spent the first three Sabbaths in pointing out the evidences of Christianity. The custom of the Jews in allowing any of their countrymen to exhort in their synagogues, gave the Apostle an easy opportunity of preaching to this people, till their accustomed enmity and obstinacy began to exert itself. Some of the Jews were however converted,§ and a great multitude of religious Gentiles, who used to attend the synagogue, and not a few females of quality. So difficult is it for even Satan himself to erase all perception of the one true God from the minds of men, so powerful is the voice of natural conscience, and so totally unreasonable is the polytheism of the pagans, that notwithstanding the extreme depravity of human nature, we find, wherever the Jews carried on the public worship of the God of Israel, it was common for some Gentiles to join in their worship. Within the bounds of the Holy Land there were a number of this sort. And I observe through the whole tenour of Josephus's history, that the Romans treated with respect what the Jews held sacred; and whoever was distinguished by any religious thoughtfulness from others, such an one found nothing to wait him in

* Philip. i. 26, 28.

† Philip. iv. 16.

‡ Philip. ii. toward the end.

• Philip. iii.

§ Acts xvii.

Gentile rites, but preferred the worship of the Jews. The devout Greeks converted at Thessalonica were of this class; and this is not the first instance we have seen of the Lord's preparing persons, by an attention to a more imperfect light, for the Sun of Righteousness. But HE is not confined to one method. The major part of the Thessalonian converts were idolaters,* who now turned to the living and true God, in the faith and hope of Jesus, who "delivered them from the wrath to come." Faith, hope, and charity evidenced this people to be God's elect: the word came to their hearts in much power and assurance; and, though it exposed them to great affliction, this did not prevent their joy of the Holy Ghost.

The restless Jews were not ashamed to join with the most profligate pagans in persecuting the new converts; and decent hypocrites and open sinners were, once more, seen united in opposing the Church of God. They assaulted the house of Jason, at whose house Paul and his companions were entertained. Precautions having been used to secrete them, Jason and some other Christians were brought before the magistrates, and calumniated with the usual charge of sedition. The Roman governors, however, were content with exacting a security from Jason and his friends for the peace of the state. But the Apostle knew too well the malice of the Jews to confide in any present appearances of their moderation; and therefore felt himself obliged abruptly to leave the infant Church. The first epistle, however, which he sent to them, not long after, plainly proves that they were not without pastors, whom he charges them to honour and obey.¹

The growth of this people in godliness was soon renowned through the Christian world. Their persecution appears to have been grievous; and hence the comfort of God their Saviour, and the prospect of the invisible world, became more precious to them. The Apostle made two attempts to return to them, but was as often disappointed by the malice of Satan.² Fearing, lest the weight of affliction might crush their religion in its infancy, he sent Timothy to them, to establish and comfort them. From him, on his return, he learnt the strength of their faith and love, and their affectionate remembrance of the Apostle, whose benevolent effusions of joy and gratitude on the occasion exceed all encomium. The influence of the Holy Spirit in enlightening, comforting, and invigorating this Church, seemed in a good measure to supply any want of pastoral instruction, in which, from their circumstances, they might probably be defective.

They were taught of God to love one another, and they exercised this brotherly affection in the strongest manner towards all around.³

Fornication indeed was a sin so commonly practised among the Gentiles, without the least suspicion of its evil, that Paul thought proper to warn them against it expressly and distinctly.⁴

In his second epistle he congratulates them on their great proficiency in faith and love: and, while he comforts them with the prospect of the second coming of Christ, he takes occasion to correct a mistake, into which they had fallen from what he had mentioned in his former epistle, of imagining that the last day was at hand. Men, who had suddenly passed from the grossest ignorance into the full blaze of gospel-day, might easily make such a mistake, especially since their affections were now so strongly captivated with heavenly objects, and since they found so little in a world of persecution to cheer their minds. There appears only one fault in this people which he thought necessary to rebuke. He intimated something¹ of it in the former epistle, in the latter he was more express.² It was the want of industry in their callings, with which he charged some of them; for this was not a general evil. How they might fall into it, is easy to conceive. Persons all alive for God and his Christ, and knowing little of the deceitfulness of the heart, and the crafts of Satan, might find it irksome to attend to the concerns of this life. It was a fault indeed, and very dangerous, if persisted in; but as it was, in all probability, soon corrected, and in part occasioned by the strength of heavenly affections, one cannot be very severe in censuring them.

It may be worth while for those, who feel themselves much irritated against similar evils attendant on the effusion of the Holy Spirit in our days, to consider whether they do not exercise more candour toward the Thessalonians, than they do toward those, who are actually walking in their steps; whether they are not apt to respect the former as real Christians, and to scorn the latter as deluded enthusiasts!

This Church bears the strongest signatures of godliness, the effect of no common effusion of the Spirit. They adorned the gospel with faith, hope, and charity; yet abashed, by their faults and ignorance, the importance of diligent and much pastoral instruction, in which their circumstances suffered them not to abound; and which, under God, would have soon cured the former, and removed the latter. They were exposed to such blemishes, as are most apt to attend

* 1 Thess. i. 9.
1 Thess. ii. 14.

* 1 Thess. v.
1 Thess. iii. 9, 10.

1 Thess. iv. 9, 10.
1 Thess. iv. 11, 12.

* 1 Thess. iv. 3-5.
2 Thess. iii. 11.

great attainments in the divine life made with vast rapidity.

It appears, that St. Paul visited this people a considerable time after, and gave them much exhortation; but we have no particular further account of them.¹

CHAPTER X.

BEREA AND ATHENS.

PAUL was conducted from Thessalonica to Berea, a city of Macedonia. Here also was a Jewish synagogue, and here the preaching of the Cross was candidly received by Jews for the first time. A very singular character is given of the Jews of this place;—they possessed a liberality of mind, which disposed them to listen with attention, and to search the Scriptures of the Old Testament with daily assiduity. The grace of God seems to have prepared these persons for the gospel; and Paul had the pleasure to find a number of the stamp of Cornelius, who were groping their way to happiness, and were ready to hail the light as soon as it should dawn upon them. Many Jews of Berea believed, and not a few Gentiles also of both sexes: those of the female sex were persons of quality. The rage of the Thessalonian Jews soon, however, disturbed this pleasing scene, and stirred up a persecution, which obliged the Christians to use some art in saving the Apostle's life. His conductors at first took the road toward the sea, which might lead the persecutors to suppose he had quitted the continent. They then brought him safe to Athens,^m once the first city of Greece in all views, and still renowned for taste and science, the school in which the greatest Romans studied philosophy. Here, while he waited for the arrival of Silas and Timothy, he beheld the monuments of the city with other eyes than those of a scholar and a gentleman. No place in the world could more have entertained a curious and philosophical spirit than this. Temples, altars, statues, historical memorials, living philosophers of various sects, books of those, who were deceased, a confluence of polite and humanized persons of various countries, enjoying the luxury of learned leisure,—these things must at once have obtruded themselves on his notice: and no man in any age, by strength of understanding, warmth of temper, and justness of

taste, seems to have been more capable of entering into the spirit of such scenes than Saul of Tarsus. But divine grace had given his faculties a very different direction; and the Christian in him predominated extremely above the philosopher and the critic. He saw here, that even the excess of learning brought men no nearer to God. No place on earth was more given to idolatry. He could not therefore find pleasure in the classical luxuries presented before him: He saw his Maker disgraced, and souls perishing in sin. Pity and indignation swallowed up all other emotions: and ministers of Christ, by their own sensations in similar scenes, may try how far they are possessed of the mind of Paul, which, in this case, certainly was the mind of Christ. If affections be lively, some exertions will follow. He laid open the reasons of Christianity to Jews in their synagogue, to Gentile worshippers, who attended the synagogue, and, daily, to any persons whom he met with in the forum. There were two sects very opposite to one another among the pagan philosophers, namely, the Epicureans and the Stoics. The former placed the chief good in pleasure, the latter in, what they called, virtue, correspondent to the two chief sects among the Jews, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, and indeed to the two sorts among mankind in all ages, who yet are in a state of nature, namely, men of a licentious and dissipated turn of mind on the one hand, and on the other self-righteous persons who substitute their own reason and virtue in the room of divine grace and divine influence. As these will in any age unite against the real friends of Jesus Christ, so it was here: The Apostle appeared a mere babler in their eyes. Jesus and the resurrection, which he preached, were ideas, from which their minds were so abhorrent, that they took them for a new god and goddess.

It belonged to the court of Areopagus to take cognizance of things of this nature. This court had unjustly condemned the famous Socrates, as if he had depreciated the established religion, though he had given as strong proofs of his polytheistic attachments, as he had of philosophical pride. It ought not however to be denied, that in a lower sense he suffered for righteousness' sake. His honest rebukes of vice and improbity exposed him to death;—so unsafe is even the least approximation to goodness in a world like this. That St. Paul escaped condemnation here, seems owing to peculiar circumstances. The court, under the tolerating maxims of its Roman superiors, seems now to have had only the privilege of examining tenets as a synod, without the penal power of magistracy.ⁿ

¹ In the first epistle he "charges them by the Lord," that it be "read to all the holy brethren." As this seems to have been his first epistle, and indeed the newest part of the whole New Testament, the solemnity of the adjuration (*ἐκείνου*) has a peculiar propriety, as Dr. Lardner observes. The Thessalonians were no doubt disposed to receive it as matter of apostolical inspiration, and the importance of bringing every Christian to be well acquainted with the word of God is fairly inferred.

^m Acts xvii.

ⁿ In this however I am not very positive: A greater degree of sceptical indifference might, in the progress

It would carry me too far to dwell on the excellent apology of Paul delivered before this court. He reproved their idolatry in language and by arguments perfectly classical; and he announced so much of the gospel, as was adapted to the very ignorant state of his audience. Whoever duly examines this little master-piece of eloquence, may see that he labours to beget in them the spirit of conviction, and to prepare them for gospel-mercy, just as Peter did in his first sermon at Jerusalem. The means used by the two Apostles are as different, as the circumstances of a Jewish and Athenian audience were: The end aimed at by both was the same.

There is reason to apprehend, that God never suffers the plain and faithful denunciation of his gospel to be altogether fruitless. A few persons believed in reality and with stedfastness, among whom was Dionysius a member of the court, and a woman named Damaris. These Paul left to the care of that gracious God who had opened their eyes, and departed from a city as yet too haughty, too scornful, and too indifferent concerning things of infinite moment, to receive the gospel. A Church could hardly be said to be formed here, though a few individuals were converted. The little success at Athens evinces that a spirit of literary trifling in religion, where all is theory, and the conscience is unconcerned, hardens the heart effectually. What a contrast between the effects of the same gospel dispensed to the illiterate Macedonians, and the philosophical Athenians! Yet there want not many professing Christians, who, while they stigmatize men of the former sort with the name of barbarians, bestow on the latter the appellation of enlightened persons.

CHAPTER XI.

CORINTH.

THIS was at that time the metropolis of Greece. Its situation in an isthmus rendered it remarkably convenient for trade. It was the residence of the Roman governor of Achaia, the name then given to all Greece: and it was, at once, full of opulence, learning, luxury, and sensuality. Hither the Apostle came from Athens, and laboured both among the Jews and the Gentiles. Here Providence gave him the acquaintance and friendship of Aquila and his wife Priscilla, two Jewish Christians lately expelled from Italy with other Jews, by an edict of the emperor Claudius. With them he

wrought as a tent-maker, being of the same occupation: For every Jew, whether rich or poor, was obliged to follow some trade. After the arrival of Silas and Timothy, the Apostle with much vehemence preached to his countrymen; but opposition and abuse were the only returns he met with. The modern notions of charity will scarcely be reconciled to the zealous indignation which he shewed on this occasion. He shook his garment, and told them, that he was clear of their destruction; and that he would leave them, and apply himself to the Gentiles in this city. With this denunciation he left the synagogue, and entered into the house of one Justus, a devout person, well-affected to the gospel. Crispus also, the ruler of the synagogue, with his whole family, received the truth. But we hear of no more Jewish converts at this place. However, many Corinthians were converted. And a gracious vision of the Lord Jesus^o who said to Paul in the night, "I have much people in this city," encouraged him to continue here a year and a half.—The rage of the Jews would doubtless be raised to the highest pitch; but, as usual, the moderate spirit of the Roman government prevented its sanguinary exertions. Gallio the proconsul, brother of the famous Seneca, was perfectly indifferent concerning the progress of Christianity, and refused to pay the least attention to their complaints against Paul, who now found himself so effectually preserved from the fury of his countrymen, that he remained in Corinth a considerable time longer than the above-mentioned year and a half. After his departure Apollos, a zealous and eloquent Alexandrian Jew, came to this city, and was made a very powerful instrument of building up this Church, and of silencing the opposition of the Jews. The modesty of this man was as conspicuous as his spirit. Till he was instructed more perfectly by Aquila and Priscilla, he knew no more of Christianity, than what was contained in the system of John the Baptist. That so able a man could submit to profit by others, was a proof of a humble frame.

It appears, that St. Paul, so far as circumstances admitted, kept up a constant correspondence with the Churches. The care of them, as he says, "came upon him daily." The Corinthians wrote to him to ask his advice on some cases of conscience; and he understood, that a variety of evils and abuses had crept in among them. On these accounts he wrote the two epistles to the Corinthians. We are astonished to find in reviewing them, how faulty many persons of this Church were; and the scene, which they exhibit, more resembles modern than primitive times in a variety of circumstances. It

^o of refinement, have prevailed at Athens in the days of St. Paul, and the court might itself be as little disposed to persecute, as the Roman powers

falls not within the design of this history to enlarge. Former writers have, with more than sufficient accuracy, detailed the evils; yet one at least be allowed briefly to record the good things of the Church of Christ. In regard to the people of Corinth, their exemption from persecution under Gallio, and their state of ease and prosperity, so uncommon with other Churches, in a great measure account for the little spirituality which they manifested. Perhaps no Church was more numerous, and none less holy in the apostolic age. And it may teach us not to repine at the want of the MIRACULOUS operations of the Holy Spirit, when we consider that these Corinthians abounded in them. But they were proud of gifts, contentious, self-conceited, and warm partizans of Paul, Apollos, or Peter; and by the indulgence of this spirit, shewed how little they had learned of true wisdom, which gives the Apostle occasion^a to recommend the wisdom that is from above, to point out the nature and properties of spiritual understanding, and to pour a just contempt on that, which is merely natural.

With the pride of false wisdom they joined a very blameable neglect in practice. One of their Church lived in incest, nor was the offender excommunicated.^b St. Paul rebukes them also for their litigiousness and lasciviousness.^c In answer to their queries, he recommends celibacy as preferable to matrimony, where a man can practise it, and that I think from general reasons,^d as more favourable to holiness, without however depreciating matrimony, or giving the least countenance to the flood of monastic abuses, which afterwards prevailed in Christendom. But mankind are ever prone to extremes: and the extreme which is opposite to superstition so much prevails at present, that I should not wonder, if some persons should startle at what I have mentioned as the sentiments of St. Paul, though it be impossible for any unprejudiced person to understand him otherwise.

So little were the Corinthians exposed to persecution, that they were invited by their idolatrous neighbours to partake of their idol feasts; and there were those who complied.^e There were false apostles among them, who, by pretending to instruct them gratis, endeavoured to depreciate Paul as a mercenary person.^f Hence, while he rebukes the faults or defects of this people, he observes that he laboured among them freely, which the false apostles pretended to do. He proceeds to correct an abuse which obtained in their assemblies, in the article of decency of dress; and another much worse,—the profanation of the Lord's Supper.^g He insists also on the

correction of their abuse of spiritual gifts, particularly those of languages.^h It appears that gifts were more prized by them, in some respects, than grace itself; and that love, which he beautifully describes, was at a low ebb among them.ⁱ He occasionally mentions however a very common effect attendant on the preaching of the gospel even at Corinth: If an ignorant idolater came into their assemblies, he was so penetrated with the display of the truth as it is in Jesus, that he could not but discover the very secrets of his soul: he would prostrate himself in the worship of God, and report that God was in them of a truth.^j And, if where the gospel was so little honoured by the lives of its professors as at Corinth, such power attended the dispensation of it, how much more of the same kind, may we suppose, happened at Philippi and at Thessalonica? For we have not yet mentioned all the evils of this outwardly flourishing, but inwardly distempered Church. There were some, who even denied the resurrection of the body, which gives occasion to the Apostle to illustrate that important article.^k

Though he had promised to re-visit them soon, yet, in the next epistle, he assigns a reason why he delayed longer than he had intended. Their Christian state was very imperfect; and he wished to be enabled, by their reformation, to come among them with more pleasure. In truth, he wrote the first epistle in much anguish and affliction.^l His soul was deeply affected for this people; and while great progress in profession seemed so inconsistent with their experience and their practice, he felt the sincerest grief. He was relieved at length by the coming of Titus.^m From his account it appeared, that the admonitions were by no means fruitless. The case of the incestuous person at length was attended to by them as it ought: they proceeded even with more severity than the Apostle desired; for, though the man gave the strongest proof of repentance, they refused to re-admit him into their Church, till St. Paul signified his express desire that they would do so.

There can be no doubt but that many persons belonging to this Church were recovered to a state of affection and practice worthy of Christianity. In particular the Apostle commends their liberality toward the distressed Christians.ⁿ But there was an obstinate party still attached to the false apostles, whose conduct extorted from him a zealous

^a Chap. xii. xiii. xiv.

^b This is a proof of the divine influence attendant on Christianity. General proofs of its authenticity may be drawn also from the subject of miraculous gifts. The Apostle's manner of describing these things proves their reality and their frequency. For no man could have convinced these Corinthians, that they were in possession of those gifts, if they themselves had not been convinced of them.

^c Chap. xv.
^d 2 Cor. vii.

^e 2 Cor. ii. 4.
^f 2 Cor. ix.

^g 1 Cor. four first Chapters.

^h Chap. vi. ⁱ Chap. vii.

^j 1 Cor. ix. compared with 2 Cor. xi. 13—20.

^k 1 Cor. xi.

^l Chap. v.

^m 1 Cor. viii. 10.

lous and honest commendation of himself, his endowments, and his office, which yet he manages with great address and delicacy, while he bewails the scandalous practices still existing among them.

On his arrival at Corinth after these epistles, he doubtless executed what he had threatened, namely, some wholesome severities on offenders, unless their speedy and sincere repentance prevented the necessity of such a step. He spent three months^d in his second visit. But we have no more particular account in Scripture of this Church.

CHAPTER XII.

ROME.

It may seem to have been purposely appointed by infinite wisdom, that our first accounts of the Roman Church should be very imperfect, in order to confute the proud pretensions to universal dominion, which its bishops have with unblushing arrogance supported for so many ages. If a line or two in the gospels concerning the keys of St. Peter have been made the foundation of such lofty pretensions in his supposed successors to the primacy, how would they have gloried, if his labours at Rome had been so distinctly celebrated, as those of St. Paul in several Churches? What bounds would have been set to the pride of ecclesiastical Rome, could she have boasted of herself as the mother-church, like Jerusalem, or even exhibited such trophies of scriptural fame, as Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, or Ephesus? The silence of Scripture is the more remarkable, because the Church itself was in an early period by no means insignificant, either for the number or the piety of its converts. Their faith was spoken of through the whole world.^e The Apostle thus commends them; nor does he in his epistle to them intimate any thing peculiarly faulty in their principles or conduct. The epistle to the Romans itself, while the world endures, will be the food of Christian minds, and the richest system of doctrine to scriptural theologians. By the distinct directions which he gives for the maintenance of charity between Jews and Gentiles, it appears that there must have been a considerable number of the former among them. If one might indulge a conjecture, I should suppose that Aquila and Priscilla, who had laboured with St. Paul at Corinth both in a spiritual and temporal sense, and had been expelled from Italy by the emperor Claudius, and whom he here salutes as at Rome, were first concerned in the plantation of this Church, which was numerous,

before any Apostle had been there. Andronicus and Junia are saluted also in the epistle: they were men of character among the Apostles, whose conversion were of an earlier date than St Paul's: they were also his kinsmen, and had suffered in conjunction with him for the faith. He salutes also a number of others, though they might not all be residents of Rome. The work of divine grace in distinguishing persons of various families and connections is ever observable. There were saints at Rome of the two families of Aristobulus and Narcissus. The former was of the royal blood of the Maccees, and had been carried prisoner to Rome by Pompey. He himself had suffered a variety of hardships incident to a life of turbulent ambition like his; yet some of his family, of no note in civil history, are marked as the disciples of Christ, and heirs of the true riches. Narcissus is distinguished in Roman history as the ambitious prime minister of Claudius; yet some of his household were in the Lord.

Paul had long wished and even projected a visit to this Church. He did not expect that his journey thither at last was to be at Cæsar's expense. Confident however he was, that when he did come to them, it should be "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." And he intreats the prayers of the Romans, that he may be delivered from the infidel Jews, and be acceptable in his ministry to his believing countrymen at Jerusalem, whither he was then hastening, that "he might come to them with joy by the will of God," and he with them refreshed. Thus did Christians in those days intreat the prayers of their brethren through the world, and sympathize with one another. And the prayers were answered: Paul was saved from Jewish malice: was acceptable to the Jewish converts, "who had compassion on him in his bonds;" and was conducted safe to Rome. At Appii Forum and the three taverns he was met by the Roman Christians: he thanked God and took courage,^f refreshed, as he had been confident he should be, whenever he might arrive among them. None but those, who know what is meant by the communion of saints, can conceive the pleasure which he felt on the occasion. After a charitable but fruitless attempt to do good to the principal Jews at Rome, he employed the two years of his imprisonment in receiving all who came to him, preaching with all confidence, and without molestation. On account of his imprisonment and examination at Rome, the nature of the gospel began to be inquired into^g in Nero's court, and the conclusion of the epistle to the Philippians makes it evident, that some of the imperial household became

^a 2 Cor. xi. xii.

^b Acts xx.

^c Rom. i.

^d Acts xxviii. 15.

^e Philippians i.

Christians indeed. And as the court was by no means disposed to treat him with rigour, but rather to favour him with indulgences as a Roman citizen, hence many preachers in Rome and the neighbourhood exerted themselves with more courage than formerly they dared to do. Yet certain persons even then could preach Christ with malevolent views of depreciating the Apostles: others did it with sincere charity. But as real benefit accrued to the souls of men from the labours of the former as well as of the latter, the heart of Paul, with a charity, the wonderful effect of heavenly teaching, could rejoice in both.

Some writers seem to have gone too far, in denying that Peter ever was at Rome. But the cause of Protestantism needs not the support of an unreasonable scepticism. Undoubtedly the account of Peter's martyrdom there, with that of Paul, rests on a foundation sufficiently strong, namely, the concurrent voice of antiquity. His first epistle, by an expression at the close of it,^a appears to have been dated thence; for the Church at Babylon, according to the style of Christians at that time, could be no other than the Church at Rome.—Of the literal Babylon we find nothing in the writers of those days.

CHAPTER XIII.

COLOSSE.

THIS city of Phrygia was in the neighbourhood of Laodicea and Hierapolis, and all three seem to have been converted by the ministry of Epaphras the Colossian, a companion and fellow-labourer of Paul, who attended him at Rome during his imprisonment, and informed him of the sincerity and fruitfulness of their Christian profession. For though he speaks to the Colossians only, yet the religious state of the two neighbouring cities may be conceived to be much the same. The example of Epaphras deserves to be pointed out to the imitation of all ministers. He always laboured fervently for them in prayers, "that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."¹ And this was indeed one of the best methods of evincing the sincerity of his zeal, which Paul owns to have been great for these Churches.

The Apostle himself, in the fulness and fervency of his charity, wishes, that the Colossians knew how strong the conflict of his soul was for them, that they might feel the comfort, understand the mystery, and enjoy the riches of the gospel.² They had never seen his face in the flesh; but he felt for

them as Christian brethren, and honoured them as those, in whom the word brought forth fruit, and who had a lively hope in Christ beyond the grave. But there must have been some particular dangers incident to their situation, to give propriety to the cautions in his epistle against philosophy and vain deceit, against Judaical dependencies and rites, and against an illegitimate humility and self-righteous austerities. Such things, he observes, carry indeed the appearance of wisdom and goodness,³ but lead only to pride and an extravagant self-estimation. And the tendency of them is, to draw the mind from that simplicity of dependence on Christ, which is the true rest of the soul, and the right frame of a Christian.

In truth, the Jew by his ceremonies, and the Gentile by his philosophy, equally laboured to overturn the gospel of Christ. And their self-righteous efforts are then only effectually opposed, when Christians know their "completeness in Christ, and walk in him." After he has delivered a number of beautiful precepts, closely interwoven with Christian doctrine, he directs them to read his epistle in their assembly, and then to send it to be read by the Laodiceans; and also to receive an epistle from Laodicea to be read in their own Church, which, most probably, was the epistle to the Ephesians; none of these places being at a great distance from one another.⁴ And he gives a plain, but very serious, charge to Archippus their present pastor. We see hence with what care these precious Apostolical remains were preserved among primitive Christians; and we may conceive, how, in the infancy of spiritual consolation, they fed on those lively oracles, which we now so indolently possess.

I see nothing more to be collected from the Scriptures concerning the state of this Church, except the instructive anecdote in the epistle to Philemon. This man, a Colossian Christian, had a slave, named, Onesimus, who deserted from his master, probably not without some depredations of his property, and wandered to Rome. That, like all great cities, was the sink, which received the confluence of various vices and crimes. There the wonderful grace of God quickened his heart. Providence brought him to hear Paul preach, which we have seen that Apostle continued to do for two years in his imprisonment. Though former means of instruction under his Christian master had failed, now, at length, his eyes were opened, and he became a Christian indeed. Paul would have found him an useful assistant at Rome, but thought it most proper to send him back to his master at Colosse; and this he did with a short letter, which may justly be considered as a master-piece of Christian politeness.

¹ 1 Pet. v. 12. ² Col. iv. 12. ³ Chap. ii. 1, 2.

Col. ii. ult.

⁴ Chap. iv. 16, 17.

ness, address and sincerity. In his Colossian epistle he mentions him also as a faithful and beloved brother.—What important changes divine grace can effect in the hearts of men, even of slaves whom proud philosophers despised, appears very evident from this instance!

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

THERE are some countries, to which we understand that the gospel was carried during the first effusion of the Holy Spirit, which are only incidentally mentioned without any detail of facts.

Extensive as we have seen, from St. Luke's narrative, the labours of the Apostle Paul were, it is evident from the epistles, that he is far from relating the whole of them. We cannot learn, for instance, from the Acts, when he visited Crete. Yet the short epistle to Titus, whom he left there with episcopal authority to ordain ministers in every city, and to regulate the churches, shews that that island of a hundred cities had been considerably evangelized; and that many persons, among a people proverbially deceitful, ferocious, and intemperate, had received the wholesome yoke of Christ.

And though I cannot but think, that the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, to whom St. Peter addresses his two epistles, must mean the Jews of those countries, yet their conversion would doubtless be attended with that of many Gentiles. Of three of these we know nothing particularly: the work of God in Galatia has been reviewed; and Asia propria alone, of all the evangelized regions mentioned in scripture-history, so far as I can discover, remains now to be considered.

It was on his first departure from Corinth, that Paul first visited Ephesus,* which name stands at the head of the seven Churches of Asia, to whom St. John dedicates the book of the Revelation. The impression made on his hearers during this visit, must have been remarkably great, as it was but a short one, and as they pressed his longer continuance among them. He left with them however for their comfort and instruction Aquila and Priscilla, whose labours were afterwards assisted by Apollos.

Paul himself returning to Ephesus, baptized in the name of Jesus about twelve disciples, who had hitherto received only John's baptism.* From this circumstance we learn, that from the first preaching of the Baptist

nothing had been done in vain. The imperfect elements of that harbinger of Christ had paved the way for clearer discoveries, and a variety of preparatory works had tended to ripen the Church of God into the fulness of light and holiness.

Paul preached three months in the Jewish synagogue at Ephesus, till the usual perverseness of the Jews induced him to desist; and to form the converts into a distinct Church. One Tyrannus lent his school for the service of Christianity; and in that convenient place, for the space of two years, the Apostle daily ministered, instructed and disputed. And thus the whole region of Asia propria had at different times an opportunity of hearing the gospel.

In no place does the word of God seem so much to have triumphed as at Ephesus. No less numerous than those of Corinth, the believers were much more spiritual. The work of conversion was deep, vigorous, and soul-transforming to a great degree. Many persons, struck with the horror of their former crimes, made an open confession; and many, who had dealt in the abominations of sorcery, now shewed their sincere detestation of them by burning their books before all men, the price of which amounted to a large sum. "So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed."—Thus triumphs the sacred historian.—Satan must have trembled for his kingdom: the emptiness of all the systems of philosophy appeared no less palpable, than the flagitiousness of vice, and the enormities of idolatry: The spiritual power of Jesus was never seen in a stronger light since the day of Pentecost; and the venal priesthood of Diana the celebrated goddess of Ephesus, apprehended the total ruin of their hierarchy.

No place on earth was more devoted to idolatry. A number of ingenious artists were enriched by making silver shrines for Diana. They felt a sensible diminution of their commerce, and found themselves bound by interest to support the credit of the goddess. Much people through almost all Asia had been induced to believe, that manufactured gods were mere nothing; and it seemed high time to make some strong efforts in favour of the declining superstition. They soon prevailed so far as to fill the city with tumult; and they hurried two of Paul's companions with them into the theatre, where the whole mob assembled. The daring spirit of Paul would have led him into the same place. His Christian friends interposed, and even some of the Asiarchs,—persons who presided over the games,—who had a personal esteem for the man, kindly dissuaded him. His zeal seems not void of rashness, but it was the rashness of a hero vexed to the soul to think that Gaius and Aristarchus, his two friends, were likely to suffer in his absence. Now I apprehend was that sea

* Acts xviii. 19.

* Acts xli.

son of extreme distress, which he felt in Asia, and which he describes so pathetically in his Epistle to the Corinthians. Human resources failed; and God alone, he learnt, could support him. The prudent and eloquent harangue of a magistrate, called the town-clerk, was the providential instrument of his deliverance. He calmed the spirits of the Ephesians, and silenced the uproar; after which Paul affectionately embraced the disciples, and left Ephesus. Three years he had laboured with great success; and he had the precaution to leave pastors to superintend that and the neighbouring Churches. But he forebore with grief, as he afterwards told these pastors in a very pathetic address, when he had sent for them to Miletus,* that their present purity would not continue unstained. Wolves would enter among them to devour the flock; and, among themselves heretical perverseness would find countenance, and produce pernicious separations. He did all, however, which man could do: he warned them of the danger; and exhorted them to the persevering discharge of their duty.

The parting between the Apostles and these ministers cannot be read without emotion. The elegant and affecting narrative of St. Luke is before the reader, and ought not to be abridged. The corruption of this excellent Church seems not, however, to have taken place, when he wrote to them his epistle. It is full of instruction; and, next to that to the Romans, may be looked on as a most admirable system of divinity. It has this remarkable recommendation, that it will serve for any Church and for any age. Not a vestige appears in it of anything peculiarly miraculous, or exclusively primitive. The controversies of the Christian world concerning doctrine would soon be decided, if men would submit to be taught by the simple, literal, and grammatical meaning of this short treatise. Every thing of doctrine and of duty is in it; and what the gospel really is, may thence be collected with the greatest certainty.

It appears that Timothy was the chief pastor at Ephesus in Paul's absence.† The Apostle's first epistle to him throws some light on the state of this Church during his administration. There were some persons of a Judaical and legal turn of mind, who endeavoured, by contentious questions, to pervert the simplicity of evangelical faith, hope, and love. There were others in the opposite extreme: Two are particularly characterized, Hymeneus and Alexander, who abused the profession of the faith to such open licentiousness, as to render their ejection from the Church a necessary measure. So early were the Churches of Christ infect-

ed with the same evils, which, at this day, fail not to attend the propagation of divine truth! From the directions which he gives to Timothy concerning the regulation of public worship, and the character and conduct of church-officers, it appears, indeed, that ecclesiastical polity had taken a firm root in this Church. But modern partizans and bigots will still search the Scriptures in vain to find their own exact model, in matters, which the Word of God hath left indifferent, or at least to be decided only by various circumstances of prudential expediency: Churches will, doubtless, be much better employed, in establishing and in observing useful practical rules, which are compatible with very different forms of government. I should suspect, that the superstitious and self-righteous spirit, which, under a thousand varieties, afterwards supported itself in the eastern Churches, and proved one of the most powerful engines of popery, had even then begun to shew itself in Ephesus, and had given occasion to the Apostolical cautions, as well as to the prophetic declaration of the vast increase of those evils in after-times.‡ It was the charitable practice of the Church of Ephesus to maintain Christian widows at the public expense. But I fear this liberality had been abused. Young widows, who had been living a life of ease, had thrown themselves as a burden on their religious brethren; and however high they might appear in Christian profession, some of them exchanged the love of Christ for the love of the world, and the indulgence of sensuality.¶ As an idle life is a great source of these evils, the Apostle recommends that these should be encouraged to enter again into the matrimonial state, which would furnish laudable domestic employments, rather than that they should be maintained by the Church in a state of indolence. The widows, who should be so maintained by the public stock, he recommends to be those, who were far advanced in life, of eminent laborious piety, and distinguished for their works of charity.

On the whole, we may discover among these excellent people some appearances of the very worst of evils; which, as yet, made feeble efforts, were kept down by the superior light and grace that prevailed, and which seemed in indignant silence to be expecting future opportunities of diffusing themselves.

We know nothing more of this Church during the remainder of St. Paul's life, nor after his death, till toward the close of the first century. St. John, the only survivor of the Apostles, long continued his fatherly care of the Churches of Asia propria. During his exile at Patmos he was favoured with an astonishing and magnificent vision of the

* 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10.

† Acts xx.

• 1 Tim. i.

• 1 Tim. iv.

• Chap. v. 15.

Land Jesus,* from whom he received several distinct charges, addressed to the seven Churches of Asia, descriptive of their spiritual state at that time, and containing suitable directions to each of them. The pastors of the Churches are called angels; and, what has been observable in all ages was then the case,—the character of the pastors was much the same with that of the people. We have here them, from the highest authority, some account of the state of these Churches at the close of the first century.—It is short, but important.—Let us endeavour to comprise it into as clear a view as possible.

The Ephesians were still alive in the faith.* Attempts had been made to pervert them, but in vain. However subtle the poison of heresy be, here it could find no admission. Nor could the abominations of the Nicolaitanes, who appear to have been a sect extremely corrupt in morals, make any progress among them. They patiently bore the cross ever attendant on the real faith of Jesus, but could endure nothing that tended to adulterate it. The taste and spirit of the gospel continued with them: They laboured in good works without fainting or weariness; and their spiritual discernment was not to be imposed on by any pretences. Yet they had declined from the intenseness of that love, which they had at first exhibited: Their hearts panted not after Christ with that steady ardour which formerly had animated this people; and, with all the marks of sound health remaining, their vigour had much abated.

How exactly does this account agree with the common case of the best Christian churches. Because it is a common case, and far from being the worst case, Christians are apt to be content under such a decline, and to impute it to necessity, or to the loss of sudden fervours of no great value, and to plume themselves on the solidity of an improved judgment. But true zeal and true charity should be shewn habitually, and not only now and then when occasional inroads of the enemy may happen to call for particular exertions. These affections ought to grow as the understanding is improved. The spirit of prayer, of love to Christ, of active services for his name, was now abated at Ephesus, and a cool prudence was too much magnified at the expense of charity. The eternal salvation of real Christians there was safe; but real Christians should have more in view than their own salvation,—namely, the propagation of godliness to posterity. These cautious Christians did not consider that their decline paved the way for farther and more melancholy declensions in the divine life: that the influence of their ex-

ample was likely to be mischievous to those who followed: that their juniors would much more readily imitate their defects than their virtues; in fine, that a foundation was already laid for the un-churching of this people, and for the desolation in which this very region now remains under Mahometan wickedness and ignorance.

The Church of Smyrna is next addressed. It was at once in a state of great purity of doctrine, and holiness of heart and life. The divine Saviour commands them in general. That, toward the end of the first century, they should have preserved the divine life in such vigour,—a period of about forty years most probably, if indeed there had been no intermissions,—is somewhat extraordinary, and except in the case of Philadelphia, not easily paralleled in the history:—So naturally does depravity prevail, in a course of time, over the best-constituted churches. But their tribulation and poverty are particularly marked. They were rich in heavenly grace, poor in worldly circumstances. If poor Churches were fully sensible of the mischiefs which often arise from the accession of opulent individuals, they would not plume themselves so much on that account as they often do. The Smyrnan Christians were chiefly of the poorer sort of inhabitants; yet were they infected with pretenders, of the same spirit as those, who attempted to adulterate the gospel at Ephesus. It may be sufficient to say, that they made large pretensions to pure religion; that their corruptions were Judaical; and that they were under the influence of Satan. This Church is taught to expect a severe persecution which was to last some time; and they are exhorted to persevere in faith.

The Church of Pergamus was also approved of in general. They lived in the midst of a very impious people, who, in effect, worshipped Satan himself, and did all that in them lay to support his kingdom. Yet was their zeal firm and steady. Nor was its object a few trifling punctilios, or some little niceties of doubtful disputation, but the precious name of Christ himself, and the faith of his gospel. Hence they were exposed not only to contempt, but to danger of life itself, and to cruel sufferings. Our Lord mentions one person with particular complacency, “my faithful martyr Antipas.” We know no more of him than what is here recorded,—that “he was slain among them, where Satan dwelt.” But what an honour to be thus distinguished! Volumes of panegyric have been composed for mere statesmen, heroes, and scholars. How frigid do they all appear taken together, compared with this simple testimony of Jesus! But this Church does not escape censure entirely. There were among them certain wicked and dangerous characters, who, acting like

Balsam of old, were employed by Satan to entice persons to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication;—two evils often closely connected: Even the abominations of the Nicolaitans were practised by some. All these are exhorted to repent, from the fear of divine vengeance. On the whole, with a few exceptions, and those indeed of an extraordinary degree of malignity, the Church of Pergamus was pure and lively, and upheld the standard of truth, though encircled with the flames of martyrdom.

The Church of Thyatira was in a thriving state. Charity, active services, patient dependence on God, and a steady reliance on the divine promises, marked their works: and, what is peculiarly laudable, their last works were more excellent than their first.* A sounder proof of genuine religion than such a gradual improvement can scarce be conceived. Yet it is imputed as a fault to this Church, that they suffered an artful woman to seduce the people into the same evils, which had infected Pergamus. Her real name we know not: her allegorical name is Jezebel: she resembled the wife of Ahab, who kept four hundred prophets at her table, and exerted all her influence to promote idolatry. The people of God should have counteracted her, but they did not: an advantage this, which deceitful guides have often gained through the negligence of the sincere. The very sex of the pretended prophetess was a sufficient reason why she should have been restrained. "Let your women keep silence in the Churches,"† is an express prohibition of females from the office of teaching, however useful in other respects pious women may be in the Church. Our Lord informs the Church in Thyatira, that he gave her space to repent, but to no purpose, and therefore now denounces severe threatenings against her and her associates, at the same time vindicating his claim to divine worship by the incommunicable title of him who searches the hearts, and declaring that he would make himself known to be such in all the Churches. To those who had kept themselves unspotted from these evils, he declares "he would put no other burden on them:" only he exhorts them to hold fast what they already had to the day of judgment. The unsound Christians in this place pretended to great depths of knowledge, which were, in reality, depths of Satan.—Such persons often impose on others, and are imposed on themselves by pretences to profound knowledge and to superior degrees of sanctity.

The Church of Sardis presents us with an unpleasing spectacle. Their great inferiority to Thyatira, evinces how possible it is for two societies of Christians holding the same

doctrines, to be in a very different state. He who "walks in the midst of the Churches," extols the growing faith and charity of the first, and condemns the drooping condition of the second. They had neglected that course of prayer and watchfulness, which is necessary to preserve the divine life in vigour. Their works were now faintly distinguishable from those of persons altogether dead in sin. Some good things remained in them, which yet were ready to die: but their lives brought no glory to God, nor benefit to the cause of Christ; and could scarce prevent its being scandalized in the world. A few names indeed there were in Sardis, whom Jesus looked on with complacency: they had not defiled their garments. But most of the Christians there had contracted deep stains, probably by freely mixing with the world, and by conforming to its customs. And we see here an awful fact authenticated in the highest possible manner,—that among a society of persons all professing the gospel, the greater part may be very dead in their souls. It should ever be remembered, that human nature is averse to real faith, heavenly hope, and genuine charity. An omnipotent energy alone can produce or preserve true holiness. This had been the case at Sardis, when the Church partook of the first effusion of the Spirit. Quite contrary to the usual course of natural things, which are brought to perfection by slow and gradual improvements; in Christ's religion godliness starts up in the infancy of things in its best form. Seldom are the last works, as was the case at Thyatira, more abundant or more excellent. Heresies, refinements, human cautions, commonly adulterate the work of God. An abuse, perhaps, of some frantic enthusiast appears: the correction of it by some presumptuous pretender to reason introduces another more specious, but more durable one. The love of the world increases with the abatement of persecution. The natural propensity of man to sin exerts itself more and more: lively Christians are removed by death: their juniors inferior in all solid godliness, superior only in self-estimation, reduce the standard of Christian grace lower and lower: apologies are invented for sin: what was once experimentally known, becomes matter of barren speculation: Even Scriptural terms themselves expressive of vital religion are despised or sparingly used: fainter and more polite modes of speech, better adapted to classical neatness, but proper to hide and disguise the ambiguities of scepticism, are introduced: the pride of reasoning grows strong: and men choose rather to run the risk of hell itself, than to be thoroughly humbled. The strong hand of God alone, in overbearing convictions and terrors, and

in the sweetest, but most powerful attractions of grace, can conquer this contemptuous spirit. No wonder then, that those, who never felt, or who have quenched in a great measure these terrors and these attractions, relapse into an impatient fastidiousness. And then the influence of the Holy Spirit itself is reasoned against with petty cavils, and aspersed by illiberal suspicions. Unfaithful and unexperienced persons, who undertake to teach in these circumstances, will often, in attempting to discriminate the operations of the Spirit of God from delusions, be unfeeling, rough, and unskilful. To them weeds and flowers in the garden of Paradise will be the same thing. A malignant instinct of profane propensity tempts them to pull up all together, till they leave only the love of the world, and, what they proudly call, common sense; which last expression will be found, at bottom, to denote a very mischievous engine in religious matters; for, so applied, it means neither more nor less than simply, the natural, unassisted powers of the human mind, darkened and corrupted, as they are, by the fall. And now, by frequent disuse, prayer and religious exercises grow disagreeable: Sensual and worldly objects allure the carnal mind with success: Lucrative speculations in commerce devour the spirit of godly meditation: The seasons of religious duty are jostled out by the throng of business; and excuses of necessity are easily admitted: Men find a pleasure in being no longer reputed fanatics; and professors will now ask leave of the world, how far it will permit them to proceed in religion without offence.

I dare not say, that all this exactly took place at Sardis; but much of it did, no doubt; and on occasion of this first instance of a general declension, it seemed not unreasonable to point out its ordinary progress and symptoms.

The Christians of Philadelphia are highly extolled. They were a humble, charitable, fervent people, deeply sensible of their own weakness, fearful of being seduced by Satan and their own hearts. The Spirit assures them, that they had a little strength, which had at once been proved and exerted in holding fast the simplicity of the gospel, and in detecting and resisting all adulterations of it. They are further assured, that the Judaical heretics should be brought at length to submit to become their disciples in religion: And a promise of strong support is held out to them, because they had maintained a true patience in suffering. To them, as to all the rest of the Churches, the rewards beyond the grave are proposed as the grand motive of perseverance.

Laodicea too much resembled Sardis. The people were in a **LUKEWARM** state, a religious mediocrity, most odious to Christ; because his religion calls for the whole ve-

hemence of the soul, and bids us to be cool only in **WORLDLY** things. The foundation of this lukewarmness was laid in pride: They had lost the conviction of their internal blindness, misery, and depravity. When men go on for years in a placid unfeeling uniformity, this is always the case. They were satisfied with themselves, and felt no need of higher attainments. The counsel, which is given to them,—to buy of him gold, white raiment, and eye-salve,—is precious; and this call to their souls demonstrates that they had learnt to maintain, in easy indolence, an orthodoxy of sentiments without any vivid attention to the Spirit of God:—In a word, his influence was only not despised in Laodicea.

Such were the situations of the seven Churches of Asia. The criticism is indeed inestimable: It is candid, impartial, and penetrating. He, who has indulged us with it, intended it for the use of all succeeding Churches:—and “he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.”

CHAPTER XV.

THE REMAINDER OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

It is the observation of one of the ancients, that St. Luke, in the close of his Apostolical history, leaves the reader thirsting for more. I feel the force and justness of the thought at this moment. I have hitherto sailed by the compass of Scripture; and now find myself at once entering into an immense ocean without a guide. In fact I have undertaken to conduct the reader through a long, obscure, and difficult course, with scarce a beacon here and there set up to direct me:—but I must make the best use I can of the very scanty materials before me.

It seems plain, that the Apostles in general did not leave Judea, till after the first council held at Jerusalem. They seem never to have been in haste to quit the land of their nativity. Probably the threatening appearances of its desolation by the Romans, hastened their departure into distant regions. And before the close of this century it appears, that the power of the gospel was felt throughout the Roman empire. I shall divide this chapter into four parts, and review, first,—The progress and persecution of the Church. Secondly,—The lives, characters, and deaths of the Apostles and most celebrated Evangelists. Thirdly,—The heresies of this period. And, lastly,—The general character of Christianity in this first age.

It was about the year of our Lord 64, that the city of Rome sustained a general conflagration. The emperor Nero, lost as he was

to all sense of reputation, and hackneyed in flagitiousness, was yet studious to avert the infamy of being reckoned the author of this calamity, which was generally imputed to him. But no steps that he could take were sufficient to do away the suspicion. There was, however, a particular class of people, so singularly distinct from the rest of mankind, and so much hated on account of the condemnation which their doctrine and purity of life affixed to all except themselves, that they might be calumniated with impunity. These were then known at Rome by the name of Christians. Unless we transplant ourselves into those times, we can scarce conceive how odious and contemptible the appellation then was. The judicious Tacitus calls their religion a detestable superstition,^a "which at first was suppressed, and afterwards broke out afresh, and spread not only through Judea the origin of the evil, but through the metropolis also, the common sewer in which every thing filthy and flagitious meets and spreads." If so grave and cautious a writer as Tacitus can thus asperse the Christians without proof and without moderation, we need not wonder, that so impure a wretch as Nero should not hesitate to charge them with the fact of burning Rome.

Now it was that the Romans legally persecuted the Church for the first time. And those, who know the virulence of man's natural enmity, will rather wonder that it commenced not earlier, than that it raged at length with such dreadful fury. "Some persons were apprehended, who confessed themselves Christians; and by their evidence, says Tacitus, a great multitude afterwards were discovered and seized:—and they were condemned not so much for the burning of Rome, as for being the enemies of mankind." A very remarkable accusation! It may be explained as follows.—True Christians, though the genuine friends of all their fellow-creatures, cannot allow men, who are not true Christians, to be in the favour of God. Their very earnestness, in calling on their neighbours to repent and believe the gospel, proves to those neighbours in what a dangerous state they are then apprehended to be. All, who are not moved by the admonitions of Christian charity to flee from the wrath to come, will naturally be disgusted; and thus the purest benevolence will be construed into the most merciless bigotry. Thus Christians incurred the general hatred, to which the conduct neither of Jews nor heretics rendered them obnoxious.—And the same cause produces similar effects to this day.

Their execution was aggravated with insult. They were covered with skins of wild beasts and torn by dogs: they were crucified,

and set on fire, that they might serve for lights in the night-time. Nero offered his gardens for this spectacle, and exhibited the games of the circus. People could not, however, avoid pitying them, base and underserving as they were in the eyes of Tacitus, because they suffered not for the public good, but to gratify the cruelty of a tyrant. It appears from a passage in Seneca^a compared with Juvenal, that Nero ordered them to be covered with wax, and other combustible materials: and, that after a sharp stake was put under their chin, to make them continue upright, they were burnt alive to give light to the spectators.^b

We have no account how the people of God conducted themselves under these sufferings. What we know of their behaviour in similar scenes, leaves us in no doubt of their having been supported by the power of the Holy Ghost. Nor is it credible, that the persecution would be confined to Rome. It would naturally spread through the empire; and one of Cyriac's inscriptions found in Spain,^c demonstrates at once two important facts,—that the gospel had already penetrated into that country, and—that the Church there also had her martyrs.

Three or four years were, probably, the utmost extent of this tremendous persecution, as in the year 68 the tyrant was himself, by a dreadful exit, summoned before the divine tribunal. He left the Roman world in a state of extreme confusion. Judea partook of it in a remarkable degree. About forty years after our Lord's sufferings, wrath came on the body of the Jewish nation to the uttermost, in a manner too well known to need the least relation in this history. What became of the Christian Jews, alone concerns us. The congregation were commanded, by an oracle revealed to the best approved among them, that before the wars began, they should depart from the city, and inhabit a village beyond Jordan, called Pella.^d Thither they retired, and were saved from the destruction, which soon after overwhelmed their countrymen: and in so retiring they at once observed the precept, and fulfilled the well-known prophecy of their Saviour. The death of Nero, and the destruction of Jerusalem, would naturally occasion some respite to them from their sufferings; and we hear no more of their persecuted state, till the reign of Domitian, the last of the Flavian family, who succeeded to the empire in the year 81.

He does not appear to have raged against the Christians, till the latter end of his reign. Indeed, in imitation of his father Vespasian, he made inquiry for such of the Jews as

^a Seneca, Ep. 14. Juv. 1 and 8 with his Scholium.

^b Buller's History of Established Christianity.

^c See Gibbon's Account of Christianity considered, p.

^d Euseb. B. 3. C. 5. Digitized by Google

were descended from the royal line of David. His motives were evidently political. But there wanted not those who were glad of any opportunity of wreaking their malice on Christians. Some persons, who were brought before the emperor, were charged with being related to the royal family. They appear to have been related to our Lord, and were grandsons of Jude the Apostle, his cousin. Domitian asked them, if they were of the family of David, which they acknowledged. He then demanded, what possessions they enjoyed, and what money they had. They laid open the poverty of their circumstances, and owned that they maintained themselves by their labour. The truth of their confession was evidenced by their hands, and by their appearance in general. Domitian then interrogated them concerning Christ and his kingdom,—when and where it should appear? They answered, like their Master when questioned by Pilate,—that his kingdom was not of this world, but heavenly: that its glory should appear at the consummation of the world, when he should judge the quick and dead, and reward every man according to his works. Poverty is sometimes a defence against oppression, though it never shields from contempt. Domitian was satisfied, that his throne was in no danger from Christian ambition: and the grandsons of Jude were dismissed with the same sort of derision, with which their Saviour had formerly been dismissed by Herod. Thus had the Son of God provided for his indigent relations:—they were poor in circumstances, but rich in faith, and heirs of his heavenly kingdom.

As Domitian increased in cruelty; toward the end of his reign he renewed the horrors of Nero's persecution. He put to death many persons accused of atheism, the common charge against Christians, on account of their refusal to worship the pagan gods. Among these was the consul Flavius Clemens his cousin, who had espoused Flavia Domitilla his relation. Suetonius observes, that this man was quite despicable on account of his slothfulness. Many others were condemned likewise, who had embraced Jewish customs, says Dion; part of them were put to death, others spoiled of their goods, and Domitilla herself was banished into the island of Pandataria. Eusebius records the same facts with some little variation: but, as he professes to borrow from the pagan writers in this instance, I shall be content with their account.

It is not hard to conceive the real characters of those two noble persons. It ought not to be doubted that they were genuine Christians, whom God had distinguished by his grace, and enabled to live upon it, and to

suffer for it. The blood of the Cæsars, and the splendour of the imperial house, rendered them only more conspicuous objects of disgust. It is well known that no positive crime is ascribed to either of them. The charge of indolence against the husband is natural enough, and does honour to the heavenly-mindedness of the man, whose spirit could not mix with the evils of secular ambition, and with the vices of the imperial court.—The humanity of the times in which we live, and the blessings of the civil freedom which the subjects of these kingdoms enjoy, protect us, it is true, from similar dangers of life or property; nevertheless, who has not observed that even rank and dignity are among us exposed to considerable contempt, whenever a man is conspicuous and eminent for a zealous profession and diligent practice of truly evangelical doctrines and precepts?

In the year 96 Domitian was slain: and Nerva, the succeeding emperor, published a pardon for those who were condemned for impiety, recalled those who were banished, and forbade the accusing of any men on account of impiety, or Judaism. Others, who were under accusation or under sentence of condemnation, now escaped by the lenity of Nerva. This brings us to the close of the century, in which we behold the Christians, for the present, in a state of external peace. One person alone enjoyed not the benefit of Nerva's mildness. Domitilla still continued in exile, probably because she was a relation of the late tyrant, whose name was now odious through the world.—Doubtless she was not forsaken of her God and Saviour.

II. The Apostles and Evangelists of this period, were their story distinctly known, and circumstantially related, would afford materials indeed of the rarest pleasure to every Christian mind. But there never arose in the Church any historians like Thucydides and Livy, to illustrate and celebrate the actions of saints. Heroes and statesmen have their reward here,—saints hereafter. Christ's kingdom must not appear to be of this world; and while large volumes have been filled with the exploits of heroes, and the intrigues of statesmen, the men, who were the divine instruments of evangelizing souls,—the New Testament history excepted,—are for the most part unknown.

The first of the twelve Apostles who suffered martyrdom, we have seen, was James the son of Zebedee: He fell a sacrifice to Herod Agrippa's ambitious desire of popularity. I recall him to the reader's memory on account of a remarkable circumstance attending his death.⁵ The man, who had drawn him before the tribunal, when he saw the readiness with which he submitted to

martyrdom, was struck with remorse; and, by one of those sudden conversions not unfrequent amidst the remarkable effusions of the Spirit, was himself turned from the power of Satan to God. He confessed Christ with great cheerfulness. James and this man were both led to execution; and in the way thither the accuser requested the Apostle's forgiveness, which he obtained. James turning to him answered, "Peace be to thee;" and kissed him; and they were beheaded together. The efficacy of divine grace, and the blessed fruit of holy example, are both illustrated in this story, of which it were to be wished we knew more than the very scanty account which has been delivered.

The other James was preserved in Judea to a much later period. His martyrdom took place about the year 62; and his epistle was published a little before his death. As he always resided at Jerusalem, and was providentially preserved through various persecutions, he had an opportunity of overcoming enmity itself, and abating prejudice, in some measure. The name of Just was generally given him on account of his singular innocence and integrity. And, as he conformed to Jewish customs with more than occasional regularity, he was by no means so odious in the eyes of his unbelieving countrymen, as the Apostle of the Gentiles. But we are to observe that if he had fully overcome their enmity, he could not have been faithful to his Lord and Master. Many Jews respected the man, and admired the fruits of the gospel in him. The root and principle of these fruits was still their abhorrence; and from the relation of Eusebius, the testimony of Hegesippus, an early Christian historian whom he quotes, and of Josephus, it is plain, that it was thought a pitiable thing, that so good a man should be a Christian. Paul's escape from Jewish malice, by appealing to Caesar, had sharpened the spirits of this people; and they were determined to wreak their vengeance on James, who was merely a Jew, and could plead no Roman exemptions. Festus died president of Judea; and, before his successor Albinus arrived, Ananias the high-priest, a Sadducee and a merciless persecutor, held the supreme power in the interim. He called a council, before which he summoned James with some others, and accused them of breaking the law of Moses.—But it was not easy to procure his condemnation.—His holy life had long secured the veneration of his countrymen.^b

The leading men were uneasy on account of the vast increase of Christian converts by his labours, example and authority: and they

endeavoured to entangle him, by persuading him to mount a pinnacle of the temple, and to speak to the people assembled at the time of the passover, against Christianity. James being placed aloft, delivered a frank confession of Jesus; and declared that he was then sitting at the right hand of power, and that he should come in the clouds of heaven. Upon this Ananias and the rulers were highly incensed.—To disgrace his character was their first intention.—They failed.—To murder his person was their next attempt; and this was of much more easy execution. Crying out, that Justus himself was seduced, they threw the Apostle down, and stoned him. He had strength to fall on his knees, and to pray, "I beseech thee, Lord God and Father, for them; for they know not what they do." One of the priests, moved with the scene, cried out, "Cease, what do you mean? This just man is praying for you." A person present with a fuller's club beat out his brains, and completed his martyrdom.

Very remarkable is the acknowledgment of Josephus. "These things"—meaning the miseries of the Jews from the Romans—"happened to them by way of revenging the death of James the Just, the brother of Jesus whom they call Christ. For the Jews slew him, though a very just man."¹ And from the same writer we learn, that Albinus severely reprimanded Ananias, and soon after deprived him of the high-priesthood.

After the death of James and the desolation of Jerusalem, the Apostles and disciples of our Lord, of whom many were yet alive, gathered themselves together with our Lord's kinsmen, to appoint a pastor of the Church of Jerusalem in the room of James. The election fell on Simeon, the son of that Cleopas mentioned by St Luke as one of

¹ I see no reason to doubt the authenticity of this passage; which gives abundant confirmation to his famous testimony of Christ, which is as follows: "About this time I lived Jesus a wise man; if indeed we may call him a man; for he performed marvellous things; he was an instructor of such as embraced the truth with pleasure. He made many converts both among the Jews and Greeks. This was the Christ. And when Pilate, on the accusation of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those, who before entertained a respect for him, continued still so to do; for he appeared to them alive again on the third day; the divine prophets having declared these and many other wonderful things concerning him. And the sect of Christians so named from him subsists to this very time."

I have examined, as carefully as I can, the doubts which have been started on the authenticity of this passage. To me they seem mere surmises. One of them, the supposed inconsistency of the historian, in testifying so much of Christ, and yet remaining an unconverted Jew, affords an argument in its favour. Inconsistencies ought to be expected from inconsistent persons. Such are many in the Christian world at this day, who in like circumstances would have acted a similar part. Such was Josephus. He knew and had studied something of all sorts of opinions in religion; and his writings shew him to have been firm in nothing but a regard to his worldly interest. To me he seems to say just so much and no more of Christ, as might be expected from a learned sceptic, of remarkable good sense, and supreme love of worldly things.

^b I have compared Josephus's account with that of Hegesippus, which last appears compatible enough with the former, and no way improbable; though I think he gives his character more of the ascetic, than I believe to be consistent with that of a Christian Apostle.

the two, who went to Emmaus, and who was the brother of Joseph, our Lord's reputed father. We shall leave Simeon at the end of this century the chief pastor of the Jewish Church.

Paul the Apostle seems to have laboured with unwearied activity from about the year 36 to the year 63, that is, from his conversion to the period in which St. Luke finishes his history. Within this period he wrote fourteen epistles, which will be the blessed means of feeding the souls of the faithful to the end of time. The second epistle to Timothy has been commonly supposed to have been written just before his martyrdom. I am convinced by Dr. Lardner's reasonings,^k that it was more probably written during his two years imprisonment at Rome, and that he was under no particular apprehension of suffering immediately.^l From this epistle it is evident, that he had already been called before Nero, agreeably to the prediction, "thou must be brought before Cæsar;" and that no Christian, not even any of those, who had welcomed his arrival in Italy, durst appear in support of him:—He feelingly complains, "all men forsook me." Yet he knew how to distinguish between malevolence and timidity; and, therefore, though he could not excuse their neglect of him, he prays God that it might not be laid to their charge. The terror of Nero seems to have overawed the Roman Christians, many of whom might have borne witness in his favour. Even Demas forsook him, from the love of the world, and departed to Thessalonica. There are seasons of critical danger, which try the hearts of the truest Christians: It was yet a new thing for a Christian to be brought before an emperor, and they had not prepared themselves by watching and prayer for the uncommon occasion. But the grace of the Lord Jesus, which had hitherto been so eminently with the Apostle, forsook him not in his trying moments: The Lord "stood with him, and strengthened him:"^m He was enabled to testify for Christ and his gospel before Nero, with the same frankness, fortitude, and eloquence, that he had formerly done before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa; and for the first time, and probably the last, the murderous tyrant Nero heard the glad tidings of salvation. It seems, by the expression,—"that all the Gentiles might hear,"—that Paul was heard in a very full and solemn assembly, and had an opportunity of giving a clear account of Christianity. And as some of Cæsar's household are mentioned as saints in the epistle to the Philippians, there is reason to apprehend, that the preaching was not

in vain. He was, as he owns, "delivered from the mouth of the lion." Nero had not then begun to persecute; and at least he would see the justness of his plea as a Roman citizen, and be disposed to favour it. Nor ought the adorable providence of God to be passed in silence, who gave this man of abandoned wickedness an opportunity of hearing the word of salvation, though it made no useful impression on his mind. Paul seems to have had this audience during the former part of his imprisonment at Rome, and to have been remanded to his confinement for the present.

Here he wrote the epistles to the Philippians and Colossians before the end of the year 62. From the former of these it appears, that the whole court of Nero was made acquainted with his case, and that the cause of the gospel was promoted by these means. In the epistle to Philemon, which accompanied that to the Colossians, he expresses a confidence of being soon set at liberty, and promises, in that case, shortly to pay them a visit.ⁿ And as he mentions Demas with respect as his fellow-labourer, both in this epistle to the Colossians, and in that to Philemon, I apprehend Demas had repented of his pusillanimity, and was returned to the Apostle and to his duty. This is the second case in which it pleased God to make use of this extraordinary man, St. Paul, for the preservation of the Church. The former instance respected the doctrine of justification, from which even Apostles were indirectly declining: The latter consisted in the exhibition of a godly spirit of zeal and an open confession of Christ. Such is the sloth and cowardice of man in divine things, and so little need is there to teach us caution and reserve, that unless God now and then stirred up the spirits of some eminent Christian heroes, to venture through difficulties, and to stand foremost for the truth against opposition, Satan would bear down all before him. Paul was one of the first of these heroes: and we shall see in every age, that God raises up some persons of this hardy temper, whom worldly men never fail contemptuously to denominate fanatics, because they discover that greatness of soul in a heavenly cause, which, in an earthly one, would excite respect and admiration.

Having obtained his liberty in the year 63, he most probably would soon fulfil his promise to visit the Hebrews; after which he might see his Colossian friends. There is no certain account of his coming either to Jerusalem or to Colosse; but most probably he executed what he had a little before pro-

^k See the Supplement to the Credibility.

^l This seems evident by his charging Timothy to come to him before winter.

^m 2 Tim. iv. ??

ⁿ I follow Dr. Lardner in the dates of the epistles, which he has investigated with singular diligence and sagacity; and I once for all acknowledge my repeated obligations to him in things of this nature.

misled. That he ever visited Spain or our island, is, to say no more, extremely doubtful. Of the last there is a very unfounded report, and of the former no other proof, than the mention of his intention in the epistle to the Romans, which had been written in the year 58, since which time all his measures had been disconcerted. And if he once more made an Asiatic tour after his departure from Rome, there seems not time enough for his accomplishing the western journey, as he suffered martyrdom on his return to Rome in 64 or 65. He could have had no great pleasure at Jerusalem: every thing was there hastening to ruin. No man was ever possessed of a more genuine patriotic spirit than this Apostle. The Jewish war, which commenced in 66, would have much afflicted him, had he lived to see it. But returning to Rome about a year before, he fell in with the very time when Rome was burnt, and Christians were accused as incendiaries. He now found no mercy in Nero, who would naturally be displeased at the effect, which he had observed the preaching of the Apostle had produced in his own household. A cup-bearer and a concubine of the Emperor had been, through Paul's means, converted to the faith, as Chrysostom assures us: and this hastened his death.—He was slain with the sword by Nero's order.^o

He had many fellow-labourers, whose names he has immortalized in his writings. He calls Titus his own son after the common faith^s. Timothy was also a particular favourite. Antiquity regards the former as the first bishop of Crete, and the latter as the first bishop of Ephesus. Luke of Antioch, the writer of the third gospel, and the faithful relater, in the Acts of the Apostles, of this Apostle's transactions, of which he was an eye-witness, is, by him, affectionately denominated the beloved Physician.—He seems to have retired into Greece after St. Paul's first dismissal by the emperor, and there to have written both his inestimable treatises about the year 63 or 64.

Crescens, whom Paul sent to Galatia, is another of his fellow-labourers. Linus, the first bishop of Rome, may be added to the list, and Dionysius the Areopagite of Athens, whom Eusebius reckons the first bishop of the Church in that city.

We have now finished the lives of two men, of singular excellence unquestionably, James the Just, and Paul of Tarsus. The former, by his uncommon virtues, attracted the esteem of a whole people, who were full of the strongest prejudices against him: and in regard to the latter, the question may be asked with great propriety, whether such another man ever existed among all those,

who have inherited the corrupted nature of Adam? He had evidently a soul large and capacious, and possessed of those seemingly contradictory excellencies which, wherever they appear in combination, fail not to form an extraordinary character. But not only his talents were great and various—his learning also was profound and extensive; and many persons with far inferior abilities and attainments have effected national revolutions, or otherwise distinguished themselves in the history of mankind. His consummate fortitude was tempered with the rarest gentleness, and the most active charity. His very copious and vivid imagination was chastized by the most accurate judgment, and was connected with the closest argumentative powers. Divine grace alone could compose so wonderful a temperature; inasmuch, that for the space of near thirty years after his conversion, this man, whose natural haughtiness and fiery temper had hurried him into a very sanguinary course of persecution, lived the friend of mankind; returned good for evil continually; was a model of patience and benevolence, and steadily attentive only to heavenly things, while yet he had a taste, a spirit, and a genius, which might have shone among the greatest statesmen and men of letters that ever lived.

We have then, in these two men, a strong specimen of what grace can do, and we may fairly challenge all the infidels in the world, to produce any thing like them in the whole list of their heroes. Yet amidst the constant display of every godly and social virtue, we learn from Paul's own account, that he ever felt himself "carnal, sold under sin," and that sin dwelt in him continually. From his writings we learn, what the depth of human wickedness is: and none of the Apostles seem to have understood so much as he did, the riches of divine grace, and the peculiar glory of the Christian religion. The doctrines of election, justification, regeneration, adoption; of the priesthood and offices of Christ, and of the internal work of the Holy Ghost, as well as the most perfect morality founded on Christian principle, are to be found in his writings; and what Quintilian said of Cicero may be justly applied to the Apostle of the Gentiles: "*Ille se profectus acrius, cui Paulus vulgo placebat.*"

During this whole effusion of the Spirit,—of so little account in the sight of God are natural human excellencies and talents,—I see no evidence that any persons of extraordinary genius and endowments, St. Paul excepted, were employed in the divine work of propagating the gospel. St. Luke, indeed, appears by his writings to have been a classical scholar of a chastised and regular taste; and to approach more nearly to Attic purity of diction than any of the New Testament writers. But to St. Paul, the great-

ness of his conceptions, and the fervour of his zeal, give a magnificent kind of negligence in composition,—in the midst of which there is also, if I mistake not, a vast assemblage of the most sublime excellencies of oratory, which demonstrate how high he might have stood in this line of eminence, had he been ambitious, or rather had he not been perfectly careless of such kind of fame. But that men so unlearned as the rest of the Apostles were,—none of whom appear by nature to have been above the ordinary standard of mankind, though by no means below that standard,—that such men should have been able of themselves to speak, to act, and to write as they did; and to produce such an amazing revolution in the ideas and manners of mankind, would require the most extravagant credulity to believe.—The power of God is demonstrated from the imbecility of the instruments.

The minds of men void of the love of God are always apt to suspect, as connected with fanaticism, the most precious mysteries of the gospel, and the whole work of experimental religion. And the more vigorously these things are described, the stronger the suspicion grows. May not this have been one reason why St. Paul was directed to expose himself the most to this unjust censure, by dwelling more copiously than any of the rest of the Apostles on views most directly evangelical;—St. Paul, I say,—because he must be allowed by all who are not willing to betray their own want of discernment, to have been a man of eminent solidity of understanding? If Christian experience be a foolish thing indeed, it is strange that the wisest of all the Christians should have been the most abundant in describing it.

Of St. Peter we have by no means so large an account of as St. Paul. The last view we have of him in Scripture presents him to us at Antioch. This was probably about the year 50. After this he was employed in spreading the gospel,—principally among his own countrymen, but one cannot suppose exclusively of Gentiles,—in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. His two epistles were directed to the Hebrew converts of these countries. And if he was far less successful than Paul among the Gentiles, he was much more so than that great man was among the Jews. He, who wrought effectually in the one among the former, was mighty in the other among the latter.¹ It should ever be remembered, who alone did the work, and gave the increase.

Peter probably came to Rome about the year 63. Thence, a little before his martyrdom he wrote his two epistles. Strange fictions have been invented of his acts at Rome, of which I shall sufficiently testify

¹ Gal. II. 9.

my disbelief by silence,—the method which I intend constantly to use in things of this nature. It is evident, however, that he here met again with that same Simon the sorcerer, whom he had rebuked long ago in Samaria, and who was practising his sorceries in a much higher style in the metropolis. No doubt the Apostle opposed him successfully; but we have no account of this matter, except a very vague and declamatory one by Eusebius. At length, when Paul was martyred under Nero, Peter suffered with him by crucifixion with his head downward,—a kind of death which he himself desired,—most probably from an unfeigned humility, that he might not die in the same manner as his Lord had done. Nicephorus informs us, that he had spent two years at Rome. St. Peter, in his second epistle, observes, that his Lord had shewn him, that his death was soon to take place. And this gives a degree of credibility to a story of Ambrose related in one of his discourses, the purport of which is, that the pagans being inflamed against him, the brethren begged him to retreat during the violence of the persecution. Their intreaties, ardent as he was for martyrdom, moved him. He began to go out of the city by night. But coming to the gate,² he saw Christ entering into the city. Whereupon he said, Lord, whither art thou going? Christ answered, I am coming hither to be crucified again. Peter hence understood that Christ was to be crucified again in his servant. This induced him voluntarily to return; and he satisfied the minds of the brethren with this account, and was soon after seized and crucified. Whoever considers the very solemn manner in which our Lord foretold the violent death of this Apostle, in the close of St. John's Gospel; and that, in his second epistle, he himself declares that his Divine Master had shewn him, that he should quickly put off his tabernacle, will find no difficulty in conceiving, that the vision³ now related from Ambrose might have taken place a little time before the writing of this epistle; and, that the writing of the epistle may have a little time preceded his seizure and violent death. I mention this as a probable conjecture only. The story itself is consonant to the miraculous powers then in the Church; and its evidence rests on the character of Ambrose himself, an Italian bishop, whose integrity and understanding are equally respectable.

Peter's wife had been called to martyrdom a little before himself. He saw her led to death, and rejoiced at the grace of God vouchsafed to her; and addressing her by name, exhorted and comforted her with "Remember the Lord."⁴

² Sermon cont. Aux. l. 11.

³ There is no necessity to consider Christ's appearance as any thing more than a vision.

⁴ Clement. Strom. 7.

There are two striking attestations to the character of St. Peter, which may be fairly drawn from the sacred writings. As it is allowed on all hands, that he authorised the publication of St. Mark's gospel, had he been disposed to spare his own character, he would not have suffered the shameful denial of his Master to have been described, as it is in that Evangelist, with more aggravated circumstances of guilt, and with fainter views of his repentance, than are to be found in the other Evangelists. I am indebted for the other remark to Bishop Gregory, the first of that name. In his second epistle St. Peter gives the most honourable attestation to the Apostle Paul's epistles, though he must know, that in one of them,—that to the Galatians,—his own conduct on a particular occasion was censured. This is evidently above nature. The most unfeigned humility appears to have been an eminent part of the character of this Apostle, who, in his early days, was remarkable for the violence of his temper. His natural character was no uncommon one. Frank, open, active, courageous; sanguine in his attachments and in his passions; no way deficient, but not eminent, in understanding,—a plain honest man; yet, by grace and supernatural wisdom, rendered an instrument of the greatest good in the conversion of numbers, and only inferior to St. Paul. He seems to have lived long in a state of matrimony; and by Clement's account, was industrious in the education of his children.

Mark was sister's son to Barnabas, the son of Mary, a pious woman of Jerusalem. He was probably brought up in Christianity from early life; and his conduct, for some time, gives a credibility to an opinion, tolerably confirmed by experience, that early converts, or those who have been religiously brought up, do not make that vigorous progress in divine things generally, which those do, whose conversion has commenced after a life of much sin and vanity. Their views are apt to be faint, and their dispositions in religion languid and indolent. We are told by Epiphanius, that Mark was one of those who were offended at the words of Christ recorded in the 6th chapter of St. John; and that he then forsook him, but was afterwards recovered to his Saviour by means of Peter. After our Lord's ascension, he attended his uncle Barnabas with Paul; but soon left them and returned to Jerusalem. Barnabas however hoping the best from one, whom he held so dear, proposed him to Paul as their companion on some future occasion. After the rupture, which this occasioned, between the two Apostles, Barnabas took him as his companion to Cyprus. Undoubtedly his character improved. Some plants are slow of growth, but attain at length great vigour, and bear much fruit. Even Paul him-

self, who had been so much offended with him, at length declared, "he is profitable to me for the ministry."¹ From the epistle to the Colossians, it is evident that he was with the Apostle in his imprisonment at Rome. This was in the year 62. His Gospel was written by the desire of the believers at Rome about two years after. I know not when to fix the time of his coming to Egypt. But he is allowed to have founded the Church of Alexandria, and to have been buried there. He was succeeded by Anianus, of whom Eusebius gives the highest eulogium. It is evident, that the society of those three great men, Barnabas, Paul, and Peter, at different times was very useful to him. Probably his natural indolence needed such incentives. In Mark then we seem to have noticed one of the first promoters of Christianity, of a cast of mind different from any we have hitherto reviewed.—The variety of tempers and talents employed in the service of God and sanctified by the same divine energy, affords a field of speculation neither unpleasing nor unprofitable.

Of the labours of nine Apostles, James, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, Jude, Simon, and Matthias, scarcely any thing is recorded.

Of John the Apostle a few valuable fragments may be collected. He was present at the council of Jerusalem, which was held about the year 50: nor is it probable, that he left Judea till that time. Asia Minor was the great theatre of his ministry, particularly Ephesus, the care of which Church remained with him after the decease of the rest of the Apostles. The breaking out of the war in Judea would probably oblige the Apostle to bid a total farewell to his native country. —While he resided at Ephesus, going once to bathe there, he perceived that Cerinthus was in the bath: He came out again hastily: Let us flee, says he, lest the bath should fall, while Cerinthus, an enemy of truth, is within it. The same story is told of Ebion as well as of Cerinthus: they were both heretics, and of a similar character: and it is an easy mistake for a reporter of the story to confound names; but if the whole should have had no foundation, it is not easy to account for the fiction. The testimony of Irenæus, who had it from persons who received their information from Polycarp the disciple of St. John, seems sufficiently authentic. Irenæus, a man of exquisite judgment, evidently believed the story himself; and surely the opinion of such a person, who lived near those times, must outweigh the fanciful criticisms and objections of modern authors. The fashion of the present age, humanely sceptical, and clothing profane indifference with the name of candour, is ever ready to seduce even good men into a disbelief of

facts of this nature, however well attested. But let the circumstances of St. John be well considered. He was a surviving Apostolical luminary. Heretical pravity was deeply spreading its poison. Sentiments, very derogatory to the person, work, and honour of Jesus Christ, were diffused with great perverseness of industry. What should have been the deportment of this truly benevolent Apostle? I doubt not but he was ever forward to relieve personal distresses: but to have joined the company of the principal supporters of heresy, would have been to countenance it. He well knew the arts of seducers. They were ready always to avail themselves of the seeming countenance of Apostles or of apostolical men; and thence to take an opportunity of strengthening themselves, and of diffusing their poison. Such has been their conduct in all ages. Having no ground of their own to stand on, they have continually endeavoured to rest on the authority of some great man of allowed evangelical respectability. This artful management, clothed with the pretence of charity, points out to the real friends of the Lord Jesus, what they ought to do, from motives of real benevolence to mankind,—namely, to bear patiently the odious charge of bigotry, and to take every opportunity of testifying their abhorrence of heretical views and hypocritical actions. Humanly speaking, I see not how divine truth is to be supported in the world, but by this procedure; and I scruple not to say, that St. John's conduct appears not only defensible, but laudable, and worthy the imitation of Christians. It is agreeable to what he himself declares in one of his short epistles, addressed to a Christian lady,—that if “any come to her house, and bring not the true doctrine of the gospel, she ought not to receive him, nor bid him God speed; because to bid him God speed, would make her partaker of his evil deeds.” His menacing language concerning Diotrephes, in the other epistle to Gaius, breathes, what some would call, the same uncharitable spirit. And when I see St. Paul shaking his garment against the infidel Jews, and hear him saying, “Your blood be on your own heads, I am clean;” and when I find him warning the Galatians thus, “If an angel from heaven should preach any other doctrine, let him be accursed,” and wishing that they which troubled them, “were even cut off,”—I am instructed how to judge of the indignation of holy St. John against Cerinthus.

Indeed the primitive Christians were even more careful to avoid the society of false Christians than of open unbelievers. With the latter they had, at times, some free intercourse; with the former they refused even to eat. —We have already seen, how our

Saviour commends the impatience and discernment of the Ephesians, who could not bear false professors.—They had tried those who call themselves “Apostles, and are not; and had found them liars.”

It is one of the designs of this history, to shew the actual conduct of real Christians in life and conversation: and the relation before us, of John's behaviour to Cerinthus, illustrates this. But,—if we must so far humour the taste of Socinians and sceptics as to allow ourselves to doubt the existence of well-attested facts because they contradict the fashionable torrent, we shall injure the faithfulness of history, make present manners the standard of credibility, and seem to agree to a very absurd modish position,—that the divine charity of a sound Christian, is the same thing as the refined humanity of a philosophical heretic.—I would ask any person, to whom the infection of modern manners renders this reasoning of difficult digestion, whether he ought more to approve of the conduct of one gentleman who should mix in easy familiarity with a company of murderers, or of another who should fly from it with horror. If we believe spiritual murderers, who labour to ruin souls by propagating Anti-christian views, to be still more pernicious than the former, we shall not be under any difficulty in vindicating St. John.

The unreasonable doubts that have arisen in our times concerning the fact we have been considering, appear to me to originate in a spirit of heresy. There is another fact, respecting this same Apostle, which comes before us loaded with similar sceptical objections; and these are to be ascribed, I fear, to the prevalence of deism. Tertullian tells us, that, by order of Domitian, John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, and came out again without being hurt. This must have happened, most probably, during the latter part of the reign of that emperor; and Tertullian was certainly competent to relate such a fact as this:—Yet it is now generally disbelieved or doubted. Is it because we see no miracles in our own times? Let the reader transport himself into the first century; and he will see no more improbability, in the nature of the thing, that a miracle should be wrought in favour of St. John, than in favour of Paul, as recorded in the last chapter of the Acts. The miracle softened not the heart of Domitian, who would probably suppose the Apostle to have been fortified by magical incantations. He banished him into the solitary isle of Patmos, where he was favoured with the visions of the Apocalypse. After Domitian's death he returned from Patmos, and governed the Asiatic churches. There he remain-

ed till the time of Trajan. At the request of the bishops, he went to the neighbouring churches, partly to ordain pastors, and partly to regulate the congregations. At one place in his tour observing a youth of a remarkably interesting countenance, he warmly recommended him to the care of a particular pastor. The young man was baptized; and, for a time, lived as a Christian. But being gradually corrupted by company, he became idle and intemperate; and at length so dishonest, as to become a captain of a band of robbers. Some time after John had occasion to inquire of the pastor concerning the young man, who told him, that he was now dead to God; and that he inhabited a mountain over against his church.* John, in the vehemence of his charity, went to the place, and exposed himself to be taken by the robbers. "Bring me, says he, to your captain." The young robber beheld him coming; and as soon as he knew the aged and venerable Apostle, he was struck with shame and fled. — St. John followed him and cried, My son, why flyest thou from thy father, unarmed and old? Fear not; as yet there remaineth hope of salvation. Believe me, Christ hath sent me. Hearing this, the young man stood still, trembled, and wept bitterly. John prayed, exhorted, and brought him back to the society of Christians; nor did he leave him, till he judged him fully restored by divine grace.

Even the truth of this last relation has been questioned by Basnage. But as I know no reason for hesitation, I shall leave it with the serious reader, who loves to behold the tokens of grace from age to age dispensed to sinners.

We have yet another story of St. John, short, but pleasing, and which has had the good fortune to pass uncontradicted. Being now very old, and unable to say much in Christian assemblies, "Children, love one another," was his constantly-repeated sermon. Being asked why he told them only one thing, he answered, that "nothing else was needed." This account rests on the single testimony of Jerom, so far as I have found. But as it seems to fall in with the spirit of the age more than the others, its truth is allowed. We may hence observe, how little regard is paid to real evidence by many critics, who seem to make modern manners the test of historical credibility. Whatever fact shews the spirit of zeal, the reality of miracles, or the work of the divine Spirit on the heart, must be questioned: What indicates feeling or humanity, this alone must be allowed to stand its ground. In truth, I should be sorry to have so beautiful a story called in question; but its evidences are by no means superior to those of the three former.

John lived three or four years after his return to Asia, having been preserved to the age of a hundred years, for the benefit of the Church of Christ, an inestimable pattern of charity and goodness.

Of the Apostle Barnabas nothing is known, except what is recorded in the Acts. There we have an honourable encomium of his character, and a particular description of his joint labours with St. Paul. It is a great injury to him, to apprehend the epistle, which goes by his name, to be his.

The work of Hermas, though truly pious and probably written by the person mentioned in the epistle to the Romans, is yet a composition of inferior merit; nor is it worth while to detain the reader concerning it. Indeed we have no ecclesiastical work, exclusive of the Scriptures, except one, which does any peculiar honour to the first century. To believe, to suffer, to love,—not to write was the primitive taste.

The work which I except is Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians. This is he, whom Paul calls his fellow-labourer, whose "name is in the book of life." He long survived Paul and Peter, and was no doubt a blessing to the Roman Church, over which he presided nine years. His epistle was read in many primitive churches, and was admired exceedingly by the ancients. It has a simplicity and a plainness, not easily relished by a systematic modern; but there belongs to it, also, a wonderful depth of holiness and wisdom. A few quotations relating to its history, its doctrine, and its spirit, will not improperly close this account of the pastors of the first century.

Its history will bring again to our view the Church of Corinth, which we have already seen distracted with schisms and contentions, and more disgracing its high calling with secular ambition than any other primitive Church. From the testimony of Clement it appears, that St. Paul's two epistles had been abundantly useful; and that he had reason to rejoice in the confidence which he reposed in the sincerity of profession, which prevailed in many of them, notwithstanding these evils. The account which he gives of their good situation, may justly be considered as the proper fruit of apostolical admonitions.—"What strangers, that came among you, did not take honourable notice formerly of the firmness and fulness of your faith? Who of them did not admire the sobriety and gentleness of your godly spirit in Christ? Who did not extol the liberal practice of your Christian hospitality? How admirable was your sound and mature knowledge of divine things? Ye were wont to do all things without respect to persons; and ye walked in the ways of God in due subjection to your pas-

* Clem. Alex. apud Euseb.

Philip. iv.

ters, and submitting yourselves the younger to the elder. Ye charged young men to attend to the gravity and moderation becoming the Christian character; young women to discharge their duties with a blameless, holy, and chaste conscientiousness; to love their husbands with all suitable tenderness and fidelity; and to guide the house in all soberness and gravity. Then ye all shewed a humble spirit, void of boasting and arrogance, more ready to obey than to command, more ready to give than to receive. Content with the divine allotments, and attending diligently to his word, ye were enlarged in your bowls of love; and his sufferings on the cross were before your eyes. Hence a profound and happy peace was imparted to you all: an unwearied desire of doing good, and a plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost was with you. Full of holy counsel, in all readiness of mind, with godly assurance of faith, ye stretched forth your hands to the Lord Almighty, intreating him to be gracious to you, if in any thing ye unwillingly offended. Your care was, day and night, for all the brethren; that the number of his elect might be saved in mercy and a good conscience. Ye were indeed sincere and harmless, and forgiving one another. All dissension and schism in the Church was abominable to you: ye mourned over the faults of your neighbours; ye sympathized with their infirmities as your own: ye were unwearied in all goodness, and ready to every good work. Adorned with a venerable and upright conversation, ye performed all things in his fear; and the law of God was written deep indeed on the tables of your hearts."

It is pleasing to see this numerous Church, of whom our Saviour had so long ago declared that "he had much people in this city," toward the close of the century, still alive in the faith, hope, and charity of the gospel, free in a great degree from the evils, which had cost St. Paul so much care and grief, and preserving the vigour of true Christianity. But history must be faithful: and their decline is described in the same epistle. Pride and a schismatical spirit, which have since tarnished so many churches, and which were evils particularly Corinthian, defaced this agreeable picture. But let Clement speak for himself:

"Thus when all glory and enlargement were given to you, that Scripture was fulfilled, 'Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.' Hence envy, strife, dissension, persecution, disorder, war, and desolation have seized your church. 'The child has behaved himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable, the mean against the eminent, and the foolish against the wise.' Hence righteousness and peace are far from you; because ye all leave the fear of God; and your spiritual sight is become too dim to

be guided by the faith of the gospel. Ye walk not in his ordinances, nor walk worthy of the Lord Christ; but ye all walk too much according to your own evil lusts, nourishing and cherishing a malignant spirit of envy, by which the first death came into the world."

The schism pregnant with so many evils gave occasion to this epistle. It seems the distracted Corinthians asked counsel of the Church of Rome; and her venerable pastor wrote this epistle in consequence of their request. He apologizes, indeed, for the delay of writing, which he imputes to the afflictions and distresses which befel the Christians of Rome, most probably on account of Domitian's persecution, the letter itself being written about the year 94. In these times the sin of schism was looked on with the greatest horror. Clement calls the promoters of it "the haughty disorderly leaders of the abominable schism."—It is no trifling guilt, which men incur, by precipitately giving up themselves to the will of those, whose aim is strife and the advancement of a sect or party, not the interest of godliness. He speaks of persons, who talk of peace with their lips, while their conduct shews, that they love to break the unity of the Church; like the hypocrite, who draws nigh to "the Lord with his lips, while his heart is far from him."

The attentive reader cannot but observe, how the same evil prevails in our days to the great injury of real piety; and yet how little it is deplored; rather, how much encouraged and promoted by specious representations of liberty, of the right of private judgment, of a just contempt of implicit faith, and of pleas of conscience. Doubtless, from these topics there are deducible arguments of great moment, and which deserve the most serious attention in practical concerns: but, at present, it is not my province to explain the middle path in this subject, nor to prove that modern evangelical churches are far gone into the vicious extreme of schism.

Vera rerum VOCABULA amissimus.

However some persons may triumph in effecting separations from FAITHFUL pastors, it is a shameful and an unchristian practice: and perhaps humble spirits may, from Clement himself, acquire sufficient instruction, how to discriminate the spirit of conscientious zeal from that of schism, and to know when they ought not to separate from the Church to which they belong. "The Apostles, says he, with the greatest care ordained the rulers of the Church, and delivered a rule of succession in future, that after their decease other approved men might succeed. Those then who, by them, or in succession by other choice, were ordained rulers with the approbation and concurrence of the

whole Church; and who in a blameless conduct have ministered to the flock of Christ in humility; who for a series of years have been well reported of by all men, these we think it unrighteous to deprive of the ministry. Nor is it a sin of small magnitude, to eject from the sacred office men whose ministry hath been thus blameless and holy. Happy those presbyters, who have finished their course, and have departed in peace and in the fruitful discharge of their duties! They at least, remote from envy and faction, are not subject to popular caprice, nor exposed to the danger of out-living the affections of their flock, and their own unfruitfulness. We see with grief, brethren, that ye have deprived of the ministry some of your godly pastors, whose labours for your souls deserved a different treatment." And he goes on to shew, that godly men in Scripture, "were indeed persecuted, but by the wicked; were imprisoned, but by the unholy; were stoned, but by the enemies of God; were murdered, but by the profane. Was Daniel cast into the den of lions by men who feared God? Were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace by men, who worshipped the Most High?"

What the sin of schism is,—in what manner the Corinthians were guilty of it,—and how far all this is applicable to the case of Churches at this day, will need but little comment. He afterwards reminds them of their former guilt in St. Paul's time. "Do take up the writings of the blessed Apostle; what did he say to you in the beginning of the gospel? Truly, by divine inspiration, he gave you directions concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even then ye were splitting into parties. But your party-spirit at that time had less evil in it, because it was exercised towards Apostles of eminent holiness, and towards one much approved of by them. But now consider who they are that have subverted you, and broken the bonds of brotherly love. These are shameful things, brethren, very shameful! Oh tell it not on Christian ground, that the ancient and flourishing Church of Corinth have quarrelled with their pastors, from a weak partiality for one or two persons. This rumour hath not only reached us Christians, but is spread among infidels; so that the name of God is blasphemed through your folly; and your own spiritual health is endangered indeed." After exhorting them with much pathos to heal the breaches, he, toward the close, beseeches them—"to send back our messengers shortly in peace with joy, that they may quickly bring us the news of your concord, which we so ardently long for; that we may speedily rejoice on your account."—What effect on the Corinthians this kind animadversion produced we know

not: The whole history of the schism certainly deserved to be noticed: It is related by the faithful pen of Clement; and the spirit of declension from simple Christianity, and the way by which the Spirit of God is commonly provoked to depart from churches once flourishing in holiness, are well described. Human nature appears to have been always the same: And this example affords a standing admonition to Christian churches to beware of that nice, factions, and licentious spirit, which, under pretence of superior discernment and regard for liberty of conscience, has often broken the bonds of peace, and sometimes subjected the best of pastors to suffer, from a people professing godliness, what might have been expected only from persons altogether impious and profane.

No apology, I trust, can be necessary for laying before the reader, from the same excellent author, the following occasional exhortation: "Set before your eyes the holy Apostles.—Through the enmity of the human heart Peter underwent a variety of afflictions; and having suffered martyrdom, departed to the due place of glory. Through the hatred of a wicked world Paul having been scourged, stoned, and seven times cast into prison, obtained at length the reward of his patience: having preached the gospel in the east and west, he obtained a good report through faith: Having preached righteousness to the utmost bounds of the west, and having suffered martyrdom from princes, he left this world, and reached the shore of a blessed immortality:—He was an eminent pattern of those, who suffer for righteousness sake. By the godly conversation and labours of these men, a great multitude of the elect was gathered together; who, through similar hatred of the world, were afflicted with cruel torments, and obtained a similar good report through faith among us. Through the operation of the same evil principle, even women among us have sustained the most cruel and unrighteous sufferings, and finished in patient faith their course, and received, notwithstanding the weakness of their sex, the prize of Christian heroes."

The nature of the epistle being practical, and those to whom it was written not being corrupted in their sentiments, much of doctrine by accurate exposition and enforcement is not to be expected. Yet the fundamentals of godliness are very manifest: Salvation ONLY by the blood of Christ, the necessity of repentance in all men,—because all men are guilty before God,—THESE GREAT TRUTHS he supposes, and builds on continually. "Let us stedfastly behold the blood of Christ, and see how precious it is in the sight of God, which being shed for our salvation, hath procured the grace of repentance for all the world."

And the nature and necessity of lively faith, as a principle of all true goodness and happiness, and perfectly distinct from the dead historical assent, with which it is by many so unhappily confounded, is well illustrated in the case of Lot's wife. "She had another spirit, another heart: hence, she was made a monument of the Lord's indignation, a pillar of salt to this day; that all the earth in all generations may know, that the double-minded, who stagger at the promises of God and distrust the power of grace in unbelief, shall obtain nothing of the Lord, but the signal display of his vengeance."

The divine dignity and glory of our Saviour, is well described in these words. "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sceptre of the Majesty of God, came not in the pomp of arrogance or pride, though who can understand the thunder of his power?—But he was meek and lowly."—

The doctrine of election runs remarkably through the epistle, in connection with holiness, as the Scripture always states it. A passage may properly be introduced here, to shew that it was a primitive doctrine, and made use of for the promotion of a holy life. "Let us go to him in sanctification of heart, lifting up holy hands to him, influenced by the love of our gracious and compassionate Father, who hath made us by his election his peculiar people. Since therefore we are the elect of God, holy and beloved, let us work the works of holiness."

The distinguishing doctrine of Christianity, without which indeed the gospel is a mere name, and incapable of consoling sinners, is doubtless justification by the grace of Christ through faith alone. See the following testimony to it in this author. It deserves to be distinctly remembered, as an unequivocal proof of the faith of the primitive Church.

"All these,—he is speaking of the Old Testament fathers,—were magnified and honoured, not through themselves, not through their own works, not through the righteous deeds which they performed, but through his WILL. And we also by his will being called in Christ Jesus, are JUSTIFIED not by ourselves,—nor, by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or by the works which we have wrought in holiness of heart, but by FAITH;—by which the Almighty hath justified all, who are or have been justified from the beginning."

His quick perception of the common objection,—what need then of good works? His ready answer to it, and his manner of stating the NECESSARY of good works, and of placing them on their proper basis, shew how deeply he had studied, and how exquisitely he relished and felt St. Paul's doctrines.—"But what then? Shall we neglect good works? Does it hence follow, that we should leave the law of loving obedience?

God forbid;—let us rather hasten with all earnestness of mind to every good work; for the Lord himself rejoices in his works. Having such a pattern, how strenuously should we follow his will, and work the works of righteousness with all our might."

The doctrine of the Spirit's work on the heart, and of the experience of his consolations in the soul, which, in our days, is so generally charged with enthusiasm, appears from the following passage:

"How blessed, how amazing the gifts of God; beloved! Life in immortality,—splendour in righteousness,—truth in liberty,—faith in assurance,—sobriety in holiness!—And thus far in this life we know experimentally. If the earnestness of the Spirit be so precious, what must be the things which God hereafter hath prepared for them that wait for him?"

I forbear to produce his views of the resurrection, and his beautiful manner of supporting the doctrine by the analogy of nature, after the manner of St. Paul. His mistake in applying the story of the Arabian Phoenix has been, I think, too severely censured. None in truth ought to censure it as a blemish, except those who can so much compliment their own sagacity, as to say, that they in like circumstances would not have done the same. If the fact had been true, it doubtless would have afforded a happy illustration of the doctrine of a resurrection. The story was generally believed in his days. That Clement believed it, is no proof of weakness of judgment: and nobody contends, that his epistle, in the proper and strict sense, is written by inspiration.

What men are by nature,—how dark and miserable;—what they become by converting grace in the renewal of the understanding, is thus expressed: "Through him, that is, through Jesus Christ, let us behold the glory of God shining in his face: Through him the eyes of our hearts were opened: Through him our understanding, dark and foolish as it was, rises again into his marvellous light: Through him the Lord would have us to taste of immortal knowledge."

This epistle seems to come as near to apostolical simplicity, as any thing we have on record: The illustration of its spirit would shew this abundantly. It is difficult to do this by single passages: A temper so heavenly, meek, holy, charitable, patient, yet fervent, pious, and humble, runs through the whole. The following specimen deserves the reader's notice. "Christ is theirs, who are poor in spirit, and lift not up themselves above the flock; but are content to be low in the Church." "Let us obey our spiritual pastors, and honour our elders, and let the younger be disciplined in the fear of God. Let our wives be directed to what is good; to follow chastity, modesty, meekness, sin-

cerity. Let them evidence their power of self-government by their silence; and let them shew love, not in the spirit of a sect or party, but to all who fear God." Again, "Let not the strong despise the weak: and let the weak reverence the strong. Let the rich communicate to the poor; and let the poor be thankful to God, for those through whom their wants are supplied. Let the wise exert his wisdom, not merely in words, but in good works. Let the humble prove his humility, not by testifying of himself how humble he is; but by a conduct, that may occasion others to give testimony to him: Let not the chaste be proud of his chastity, knowing that from God he has received the gift of continency." "Have we not all one God, one Christ, one spirit of grace poured upon us, and one calling in Christ? Why do we separate and distract the members of Christ, and fight against our own body, and arrive at such an height of madness, as to forget that we are members one of another."

"Is any among you strong in faith, mighty in knowledge, gifted in utterance, judicious in doctrines, and pure in conduct. The more he appears exalted above others, the more need has he to be poor in spirit; and to take care, that he look not to his own things; but that he study to promote the common good of the Church."

"Every one, whose heart has any good degree of the fear and love, which is the result of our common hope, would rather that he himself be exposed to censure than his neighbours; and would rather condemn himself, than break that beautiful bond of brotherly love, which is delivered to us."

After pressing the beautiful example of the charity of Moses recorded in the book of Exodus," he says, "who of you has any generosity of sentiment, or bowels of compassion, or fulness of love? Let him say, if the strife and schism be on any account: I will depart, wherever you please, and perform whatever the Church shall require. Only let Christ's flock live in peace with their settled pastors. Surely the Lord will smile on such a character."

III. The reader will not expect that I should solicitously register the names, and record the opinions and acts of those, who are commonly called heretics.—I have only to view them in one single light, namely, as they deviated from the SPIRIT of the gospel. Let us keep in view what that really is. The simple faith of Christ as the only Saviour of lost sinners, and the effectual influences of the Holy Ghost in recovering souls altogether depraved by sin,—these are the leading ideas.

When the effusion of the Holy Ghost first took place, these things were taught with

• Ex. xxxii.

power; and no sentiments, which militated against them, could be supported for a moment. As, through the prevalence of human corruption and the crafts of Satan, the love of the truth was lessened, heresies and various abuses of the gospel appeared: and in estimating them, we may form some idea of the declension of true religion toward the end of the century, which doubtless was not confined to the Jewish Church, but appears, in a measure, to have affected the Gentiles also.

The epistolary part of the New Testament affords but too ample proof of corruptions. The Apostle Paul guards the Romans against false teachers, one mark of whose character was, "that by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple."² Corinth was full of evils of this kind. There false apostles transformed themselves into the appearance of real ones. The Jewish corruption of self-righteousness, which threatened the destruction of the Galatian church, has been distinctly considered. Many Christians, so called, walked as enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end was destruction, whose god was their belly, whose glory was in their shame, who minded earthly things.³ So Paul tells the Philippians, and with tears of charity.—The epistle to the Colossians proves, that pretty strong symptoms of that amazing mass of austerities and superstitions by which, in after-ages, the purity of the faith was so much clouded, and of that self-righteousness which superseded men's regard to the mediation of Jesus and the glory of divine grace, had begun to discover themselves, even in the Apostle's days.

The prophecy of Antichrist, in the first epistle of Timothy, chapter the fourth, expressly intimates, that its spirit had already commenced by the excessive valuation of celibacy and abstinence. Add to this, the corrupt mixtures of vain philosophy had also seduced some from the faith. Under the gradual increase of these complicated evils, a meaner religious taste was formed, in several churches at least, which could even bear to admire such injudicious writers as Hermas and the Pseudo-Barnabas.⁴—Peter, and Jude,⁵ have graphically described certain horrible enormities of nominal Christians, little, if at all, inferior to the most scandalous eruptions of the same kind in these latter ages. The spirit of schism we have seen again breaking out in the Church of Corinth.—But let us observe more distinctly the HERETICAL opinions of the first century.

Ecclesiastical historians, who have passed by the most glorious scenes of real Christianity, have yet with minute accuracy given us the lists of heretics, subtilized by refined

• Rom. xvi.
• 2 Pet.

• Philip. iii.
• Jude's Epistle.

subdivisions without end. It seems more useful to notice them, as they stand contradistinguished to that FAITH which was once delivered to the saints. Tertullian reduces the heretics of the apostolic times to two classes, the Docetæ and the Ebionites. Theodoret also gives the same account of them.

Of the instruments of Satan in these things, Simon, who had been rebuked by Peter in Samaria, was the most remarkable; he was the father of the Gnostics or Docetæ, and of a number of heretical opinions and practices of the first century. However obscure the history of Simon himself may be, the leading opinions of the Docetæ are obvious enough. They held, that the Son of God had no proper humanity, and that he died only in appearance on the cross. Cerinthus allowed him a real human nature: he considered Jesus as a man born of Joseph and Mary; but supposed, that CHRIST,—whom yet all the heretics looked on as properly inferior to the supreme God,—descended from heaven, and united himself to the man Jesus.

The Ebionites were not much different from the Cerinthians: They removed the appearance of mystery from the subject: In general they looked on Jesus Christ as a mere man born of Mary and her husband, though a man of a most excellent character. —Whoever thinks it needful to examine these things more nicely, may consult Irenæus and Eusebius: the account of Ebion in the latter is short, but sufficiently clear.

It is not to be wondered at, that with such low ideas of the Redeemer's person, the Ebionites denied the virtue of his atoning blood; and laboured to establish justification by the works of the law. Their rejection of the divine authority of St. Paul's epistles, and their accusation of him as an Antinomian, naturally arise from their system. Tertullian tells us, that this was a Jewish sect: and their observance of Jewish rites makes his account the more credible.

These two heretical schemes, the one opposing the humanity of Christ, the other annihilating the divinity, were the inventions of men leaning to their own understandings, and unwilling to admit the great mystery of godliness,—“God manifest in the flesh.” The primitive Christians held, that the Redeemer was both God and man, equally possessed of the real properties of both natures; and no man, willing to take his creed from the New Testament, ever thought otherwise; the proofs of both natures in one person, Christ Jesus, being abundantly diffused through the sacred books. One single verse in the ninth chapter to the Romans,* expressing both, is sufficient to confound all the critical powers of heretics: and therefore,

on the slightest grounds, they have been compelled to have recourse to their usual method of suspecting the soundness of the sacred text. The only real difficulty in this subject is, for man to be brought to believe, on divine authority, that doctrine, the grounds of which he cannot comprehend. Though we have just as good reason to doubt the union of soul and body in man, from our equal ignorance of the bond of that union, yet proud men, unacquainted with the internal misery and depravity of nature, which renders a complete character, like that of Christ, so divinely suitable to our wants, and so exactly proper to mediate between God and man, soon discovered a disposition to oppose the doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus; and, as there were two ways of doing this,—by taking away either one or the other of the two natures,—we see at once the origin of the two sects before us. The doctrine of the atonement was opposed by both; —by the Docetæ in their denial of the real human nature of Jesus; and by the Ebionites in their denial of the divine nature, which stamps an infinite value on his sufferings.

Such were the perversions of the doctrines of the incarnation and atonement of the Son of God. Nor did the doctrine of justification by faith only, which St. Paul had so strenuously supported, escape a similar treatment. In all ages this doctrine has been either fiercely opposed, or basely abused. The epistle to the Galatians describes the former treatment: the epistle of Jude the latter. The memoirs of these heretics, short and imperfect as they are, inform us of some, who professed an extraordinary degree of sanctity, and affected to be abstracted altogether from the flesh, and to live in excessive abstemiousness. We find also that there were others, who, as if to support their Christian liberty, lived in sin with greediness, and indulged themselves in all the gratifications of sensuality. Nothing short of a spiritual illumination and direction can indeed secure the improvement of the grace of the gospel to the real interests of holiness. At this day there are persons, who think that the renunciation of all our own works in point of dependence must be the destruction of practical religion; and they are thence led to seek salvation “by the works of the law:” while others, admitting in words the grace of Jesus Christ, encourage themselves in actual sin. A truly humbled frame, and a clear insight into the beauty of holiness, through the effectual influence of the divine Spirit, will teach men to live a sanctified life by the faith of Jesus. The Gentile converts by the Gnostic heresy, and the Jewish by that of Ebion, were considerably corrupted toward the close of the century. The latter indeed of these heresies had been gradually

making progress for some time. We have seen, that the object of the first council of Jerusalem was to guard men against the imposition of Mosaic observances, and to teach them to rely on the grace of Christ alone for salvation. But self-righteousness is a weed of too quick a growth to be easily eradicated. The Pharisaic Christians, we may apprehend, were not immediately advanced to the full size of heresy. But when they proceeded to reject St. Paul's writings, we may fairly conclude, that they fully rejected the article of justification.—A separation was made; and the Ebionites, as a distinct body of men, deserved the name of heretics.

St. Paul indeed, who, with an eagle's eye, had explored the growing evil, was now no more in the world. But the HEAD of the Church prolonged the life of his favourites John to the extreme age of a hundred: and his authority checked the progress of heretical pravity. He resided much at Ephesus, where Paul had declared, that grievous wolves would make their appearance. Jerome says, that he wrote his gospel, at the desire of the bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus and Ebion. Indeed such expressions as these, "the passover, a feast of the Jews,"—and "that sabbath-day was an high day," seem to indicate, that the Jewish polity was now no more, it not being natural to give such explications of customs, except to those, who had no opportunity of ocular inspection. I cannot but think, that Dr. Lardner, who is no friend to the vital doctrines of Christianity, has betrayed, in his attempts to shew that St. John in his gospel did not intend to oppose any particular heresies, his own predilection for Socinianism.¹ In truth, there are various internal proofs which corroborate the testimony of Jerome. The very beginning of his gospel is an authoritative declaration of the proper Deity of Jesus Christ: The attentive reader cannot but recollect various discourses to the same purport: The confession of Thomas, after his resurrection, stands single in St. John's gospel: The particular pains, which he takes, to assure us of the real death of his master, and of the issuing of real blood and water from his wounded side, are delivered with an air of one, zealous to obviate the error of the Docetæ: Nor can I understand his laying so great a stress on Jesus Christ's coming in the flesh² in any other manner.

While this Apostle lived, the heretics were much discountenanced. And it is certain that Gnostics and Ebionites were always looked on as perfectly distinct from the Christian church. There needs no more evidence to prove this, than their arrangement by Irenæus and Eusebius under her-

etical parties. Doubtless they called themselves Christians; and so did all heretics, for obvious reasons: and, for reasons equally obvious, all, who are tender of the fundamentals of Christ's religion, should not own their right to the appellation. Before we dismiss them I would remark,

1. That it does not appear by any evidence which I can find, that these men were persecuted for their religion. Retaining the Christian name; and yet glorifying man's righteousness, wisdom, and strength, "they spake of the world, and the world heard them." The Apostle John in saying this, had his eye, I believe, on the Docetæ particularly. In our own times persons of a similar stamp would willingly ingratiate themselves with real Christians; and yet at the same time avoid the cross of Christ, and whatever would expose them to the enmity of the world. We have the testimony of Justin Martyr, that Simon was honoured in the Pagan world, even to idolatry.³—What stress is laid on this circumstance in the New Testament, as an evidence of the characters of men in religious concerns, is well known.

2. If it be made an objection against evangelical principles, that numbers, who profess them, have run into a variety of abuses, perversions, and contentions, we have seen enough, even in the first century, of the same kind of evils to convince us, that such objections militate not against divine truth, but might have been made with equal force against the apostolical age.

3. A singular change in one respect has taken place in the Christian world. The two heretical parties above described, were not much unlike the Arians and Socinians at this day. The former have, radically, the same ideas as the Docetæ, though it would be unjust to accuse them of the Antiochian abominations which defiled the followers of Simon: The latter are the very counterpart of the Ebionites. The Trinitarians were then the body of the Church; and so much superior was their influence and numbers, that the other two were treated as heretics. At present the two parties, who agree in lessening the dignity of Christ, though in an unequal manner, are carrying on a vigorous controversy against one another, while the Trinitarians are despised by both as unworthy the notice of men of reason and letters. Serious and humble minds will, however, insist on the necessity of our understanding that certain fundamental principles are necessary to constitute the real gospel: The Divinity of Christ,—his atonement,—justification by faith,—regeneration,—these they will have observed to be the principles of the primitive Church: and, within this inclosure, the whole of that piety which pro-

¹ See his supplement to the credibility in the history of St. John.

² 1 John iv.

³ Apud. Euseb. B. 2. E. H.

duced such glorious effects has been confined: and it is worthy the attention of learned men to consider whether the same remark may not be made in all ages.

IV. Thus have we seen a more astonishing revolution in the human mind and in human manners, than eyes took place in any age, effected without any human power, legal or illegal, and even against the united opposition of all the powers then in the world: and this too not in countries rude or uncivilised, but in the most humanised, the most learned, and the most polished part of the globe,—within the Roman empire,—no part of which was exempted from a sensible share in its effects.—This empire, within the first century at least, seems to have been the proper limit of Christian conquests.¹

If an infidel or sceptic can produce any thing like this effected by Mahometanism, or by any other religion of human invention, he may then with some plausibility compare those religions with Christianity. But, as the gospel stands unrivalled in its manner of subduing the minds of men,—the argument for its divinity from its propagation in the world, will remain invincible.

And, surely, every dispassionate observer must confess, that the change was from BAD to GOOD. No man will venture to say, that the religious and moral principles of Jews and Gentiles, before their conversion to Christianity, were good. The idolatries, abominations, and ferocity of the Gentile world will be allowed to have been not less than they are described in the first chapter to the Romans: and the writings of Horace and Juvenal will prove, that the picture is not exaggerated. The extreme wickedness of the Jews is graphically delineated by their own historian, and is neither denied nor doubted by any one. What but the influence of God, and an effusion of his Holy Spirit,—the first of the kind since the coming of Christ, and the measure and standard for regulating our views of all succeeding ones,—can account for such a change? From the Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles, I have drawn the greatest part of the narrative; but the little that has been added from other sources is not heterogeneous.—Here are thousands of men turned from the practice of every wickedness to the practice of every virtue: many, very suddenly, or at least in a short space of time; reformed in understanding, in inclination, in affection; knowing, loving, and confiding in God;

from a state of mere selfishness converted into the purest philanthropists; living only to please God and to exercise kindness toward one another; and all of them, recovering really, what philosophy only pretended to,—the dominion of reason over passion; unfeignedly subject to their Maker; rejoicing in his favour amidst the severest sufferings; and serenely waiting for their dissolution into a land of blissful immortality.—That all this must be of God is demonstrative:—but the important inference, which teaches the divine authority of Christ, and the wickedness and danger of despising, or even neglecting him, is not always attended to by those who are most concerned in it.

But the Christian Church was not yet in possession of any external dignity or political importance. No one nation as yet was Christian, though thousands of individuals were so;—but those chiefly of the middling and lower ranks. The modern improvements of civil society have taught men, however, that these are the strength of a nation; and that whatever is praise-worthy is far more commonly diffused among them, than among the noble and great. In the present age then it should be no disparagement to the character of the first Christians, that the Church was chiefly composed of persons too low in life, to be of any weight in the despotic systems of government which then prevailed. We have seen one person² of uncommon genius and endowments, and two³ belonging to the Imperial family, but scarce any more, either of rank or learning, connected with Christianity. We ought not then to be surprised, that Christians are so little noticed by Tacitus and Josephus: These historians are only intent on subterranean and general politics: they give no attention even to the eternal welfare of individuals.—Nor is this itself a slight exemplification of the genius of that religion, which is destined to form men for the next life, and not for this.

In doctrines the primitive Christians agreed: They all worshipped the one living and true God, who made himself known to them in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Each of these they were taught to worship by the very office of baptism performed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost:—And the whole economy of grace so constantly reminded them of their obligations to the Father who chose them to salvation, to the Saviour who died for them, and to the Comforter who supported and sanctified them; and was so closely connected with their experience and practice, that they were perpetually incited to worship the Divine Three in One. They all concurred in feeling conviction of sin, of

¹ Indeed that France had any share in the blessings of the gospel, within this century, can only be inferred from the knowledge we have, that it was introduced into Spain. Whether our own country was evangelised within this century, is very doubtful. Nor can we be certain that any ministers as yet had passed into Africa. The guarded, therefore, that the gospel had spread through the Roman empire, must be understood with a few exceptions, though I think scarce any more than those which have been mentioned.

² Paul.

³ Clement and Domitilla.

helplessness, of a state of perdition : in relying on the atoning blood, perfect righteousness, and prevalent intercession of Jesus, as their only hope of heaven. Regeneration by the Holy Ghost was their common privilege, and without his constant influence they owned themselves obnoxious only to sin and vanity. Their community of goods, and their love-feasts,^a though discontinued at length,—probably because found impracticable,—demonstrated their superlative charity and heavenly-mindedness. Yet a gloomy cloud hung over the conclusion of the first century.

The first impressions made by the effusion of the Spirit are generally the strongest and the most decisively distinct from the spirit of the world. But human depravity, overborne for a time, rises afresh, particularly in the next generation. Hence the disorders of schism and heresy. Their tendency is to destroy the pure work of God. The first Christians, with the purest charity to the persons of heretics, gave their errors no quarter ; but discountenanced them by every reasonable method.

The heretics, on the contrary, endeavoured to unite themselves with Christians. If the same methods be at this day continued ;—if the heretic endeavour to promote his false religion by pretended charity, and the Christian stand aloof from him, without dreading the charge of bigotry, each act in character, as their predecessors did. The heretics by weakening men's attachment to

Christ, and the schismatics by promoting a worldly and uncharitable spirit, each did considerable mischief ; but it was the less, because Christians carefully kept themselves distinct from the heretical, and thus set limits to the infection.

It has been of unspeakable detriment to the Christian religion, to conceive that all who profess it, are believers of it, properly speaking. Whereas very many are Christians in NAME only, never attending to the NATURE of the gospel at all. Not a few glory in sentiments subversive of its genius and spirit. And there are still more who go not so far in opposition to godliness ; yet, by making light of the whole work of grace on the heart, they are as plainly void of Christianity. We have seen the first Christians individually converted : and, as human nature needs the same change still, the particular instances of conversion described in the Acts are models for us at this day. National conversions were then unknown ; nor has the term any proper meaning. But when whole countries are supposed to become Christians merely because they are so termed ; when conversion of heart is kept out of sight ; and when no spiritual fruits are expected to appear in practice ;—when such ideas grow fashionable, opposite characters are blended ; the form of the gospel stands, and its power is denied. But let us not anticipate :—These scenes appeared not in the first century.

CENTURY II.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANS DURING THE REIGN OF TRAJAN.

THE master of the Roman world in the beginning of this century was the renowned Trajan. His predecessor Nerva had restored the Christian exiles, and granted a full toleration to the Church. Hence the last of the Apostles had recovered his station at Ephesus, and slept in the Lord, before the short interval of tranquillity was closed by the persecuting spirit of Trajan. Whatever explication may be given or conjectured of the cause of his dislike of Christians, he had a confirmed prejudice against them, and me-

ditated the extinction of the name : nor does it appear that he ever changed his sentiments, or retracted his edicts against them.

There is an account of his persecution in his correspondence with Pliny the governor of Bithynia, a man well known in classical history. The two epistles between the master and the servant deserve to be transcribed at length :^b they seem to have been written in 106 or 107.

C. Pliny to Trajan Emperor health.

" It is my usual custom, Sir, to refer all things, of which I harbour any doubts, to you. For who can better direct my judgment in its hesitation, or instruct my understanding in its ignorance ? I never had the fortune to be present at any examination of Chris-

^a See Jude's epistle.

^b Pliny's Epistles, x, 97, 98.

tians, before I came into this province. I am therefore at a loss, to determine what is the usual object either of inquiry or of punishment, and to what length either of them is to be carried. It has also been with me a question very problematical,—whether any distinction should be made between the young and the old, the tender and the robust;—whether any room should be given for repentance, or the guilt of Christianity once incurred is not to be expiated by the most unequivocal retraction;—whether the name itself, abstracted from any flagitiousness of conduct, or the crimes connected with the name, be the object of punishment. In the mean time this has been my method, with respect to those, who were brought before me as Christians. I asked them whether they were Christians: if they pleaded guilty, I interrogated them twice afresh, with a menace of capital punishment. In case of obstinate perseverance, I ordered them to be executed. For of this I had no doubt, whatever was the nature of their religion, that a sullen and obstinate inflexibility called for the vengeance of the Magistrate. Some there were infected with the same madness, whom, on account of their privilege of citizenship, I reserved to be sent to Rome, to be referred to your tribunal. In the course of this business, informations pouring in, as is usual when they are encouraged, more cases occurred. An anonymous libel was exhibited, with a catalogue of names of persons, who yet declared, that they were not Christians then, or ever had been; and they repeated after me an invocation of the gods and of your image, which, for this purpose, I had ordered to be brought with the images of the deities: They performed sacred rites with wine and frankincense, and execrated Christ,—none of which things I am told a real Christian can ever be compelled to do. On this account I dismissed them. Others, named by an informer, first affirmed, and then denied the charge of Christianity; declaring that they had been Christians, but had desisted some three years ago, others still longer, some even twenty years ago. All of them worshipped your image, and the statues of the gods, and also execrated Christ. And this was the account which they gave of the nature of the religion they once had professed, whether it deserves the name of crime or error,—namely—that they were accustomed on a stated day to meet before day-light, and to repeat among themselves a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by an oath with an obligation of not committing any wickedness;—but on the contrary of abstaining from thefts, robberies, and adulteries;—also of not violating their promise, or denying a pledge, after which it was their custom to separate, and to meet again at a promiscuous harmless

meal, from which last they yet desisted, after the publication of my edict, in which, agreeably to your orders, I forbade any societies of that sort. On which account I judged it the more necessary, to inquire, *BY TORTURE*, from two females, who were said to be deaconesses, what is the real truth. But nothing could I collect, except a depraved and excessive superstition. Deferring therefore any further investigation, I determined to consult you. For the number of culprits is so great, as to call for serious consultation. Many persons are informed against of every age and of both sexes; and more still will be in the same situation. The contagion of the superstition hath spread not only through cities, but even villages and the country. Not that I think it impossible to check and to correct it. The success of my endeavours hitherto forbids such desponding thoughts: for the temples, once almost desolate, begin to be frequented, and the sacred solemnities, which had long been intermitted, are now attended afresh; and the sacrificial victims are now sold every where, which once could scarce find a purchaser. Whence I conclude, that many might be reclaimed, were the hope of impunity, on repentance, absolutely confirmed."

Trajan to Pliny.

"You have done perfectly right, my dear Pliny, in the inquiry which you have made concerning Christians. For truly no one general rule can be laid down, which will apply itself to all cases. These people must not be sought after: If they are brought before you and convicted; let them be capitally punished, yet with this restriction, that if any renounce Christianity, and evidence his sincerity by supplicating our gods, however suspected he may be for the past, he shall obtain pardon for the future on his repentance. But anonymous libels in no case ought to be attended to; for the precedent would be of the worst sort, and perfectly incongruous to the maxims of my government."

The moral character of Pliny is one of the most amiable in all Pagan authority; yet does it appear, that he joined with his master Trajan in his hatred of Christians. In the course of this history many instances of the same kind will occur. Trajan's character is doubtless much inferior to Pliny's;—It is illustrious indeed by reason of great talents, and great exploits; but, by the testimony of Dio, Spartian, and Julian, stained with flagrant vices; and, as is generally confessed, tarnished by an extravagant ambition. But how is it to be accounted for, that men, who seem enamoured with the beauty of virtue, should turn from it with perfect disgust, and even persecute it with rancour, when it

appears in the most genuine colours? Let those who imagine such men as Pliny to be good and virtuous in the proper sense of the words, try to solve this phenomenon on their own principles. On those of the real gospel the question is not hard to be determined. Admitting that Pliny might at first be prejudiced against Christians from misrepresentation, how happens it, that he continues so after better information, even when he is convinced, that no moral evil is to be found in the Christians of Bithynia, that their meetings are peaceable, and the ends aimed at by them, not only innocent, but laudable? The truth is, virtue, in Pliny's writings, and virtue in St. Paul's, mean not the same thing. For humility, the basis of a Christian's virtue, the pagan has not even a name in his language. The glory of God is the end of virtue in the system of one,—his own glory is the end of virtue in the system of the other. The Christians of Bithynia would be able to give the severe inquisitor "a reason of the hope that was in them with meekness and fear," and then suffering according to the will of God, to commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator. These and other precious sentiments in St. Peter's first epistle, which was addressed to some of their fathers, possibly to some of themselves then alive, would now be remembered with peculiar force. A vindictive mind like Pliny's, elated with conscious rectitude, would scorn to hear of being saved by the atoning blood of Jesus, would not believe the representation of human nature which they would give him, and would prefer his own reason before the instruction of the Holy Spirit. Had he been, like Cicero, deeply tinged with the academical philosophy of Greece, like him he would have glided in sceptical ambiguity, or have inclined to the atheistic views, to which most of the old philosophers were devoted. But as he seems to have imitated him, rather in his passion for oratorical glory, than in his philosophical spirit, he rested in the vulgar creed, highly absurd as it was, and preferred it to the purest dictates of Christianity. The former thwarted not his pride and his lusts: the latter required the humiliation of the one, and the mortification of the other.

In all ages, men even of amiable morals, if destitute of true holiness, are enemies of the gospel.—We here see the true reason of this enmity; which is not capable of being abated by argument: for if that had been the case, Pliny might have seen the iniquity of his proceedings. To call a thing madness and depraved superstition, on the face of which he sees much good and no evil, is the height of unreasonableness. But it is practised by many at this day, who call themselves Christians, but are really as averse to the gospel as Pliny was: and if we would

not be deceived by mere names, but would enter into the spirit of things, it would not be difficult to understand, who they are that resemble Pliny, and who they are that resemble the Christians of Bithynia.

In fact, as there are now, so there were then, persons, who worshipped Christ as their God, who loved one another as brethren united in him: men who derived from his influence support under the severest pressures: who were calumniated by others: who were treated as silly people, on account of that humble and self-denying spirit, by which they kept up communion with their Saviour on earth; and who expected to enjoy him in heaven.—It was not the fault of Trajan and Pliny, that such principles were not exterminated from the earth. They hated the men and their religion.

The difference between the persecutors and the sufferers is remarkable with respect to the spirit of politics. The religion of Trajan was governed by this spirit: And his servant thinks it needful to force men to follow THE PAGAN religion, whether they believed it to be right or not. Persecuting edicts appear to have been in force against Christians before the correspondence which we have seen; and Nerva's toleration seems to have ceased. But the Christians shewed, that their Master's kingdom was not of this world: They were meek and passive, as Christ himself had been, and as Peter had exhorted them to be. Their number was very large in Bithynia, capable surely of raising a rebellion troublesome to the state: and they would have done so, if their spirits had been as turbulent as those of many pretended Christians. "But they were subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." If there had been the least suspicion of a seditious spirit among them, Pliny must have mentioned it; and their discontinuance of their feasts of charity, after they found them disagreeable to government, is a proof of their loyal and peaceable temper.

In Asia, Arius Antoninus persecuted them with extreme fury. I am not certain whether his persecution belongs to the reign of Trajan; but as there was an Antoninus very intimate with Pliny, the following story of him from Tertullian, may not improperly be introduced here.—The whole body of Christians, wearied with constant hardships, presented themselves before his tribunal: He ordered a few of them to execution, and said to the rest, "Miserable people, if you choose death, you may find precipices and halters enow."—I am willing to believe, that the Christians hoped to disarm the persecutor by the sight of their numbers.

One of the most venerable characters at this time was Simeon, bishop of Jerusalem,

the successor of St. James. Jerusalem indeed was no more, but the Church still existed in some part of Judea. Some heretics accused him, as a Christian, before Atticus the Roman governor. He was then a hundred and twenty years old, and was scourged many days. The persecutor was astonished at his hardness; but not moved with pity for his sufferings: at last he ordered him to be crucified.¹

It was in the year 107, that Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, was martyred for the faith of Jesus. On the death of Eusebius, about the year 70, he had been appointed in his room by the Apostles who were then alive. He governed the Church during this long period: Nor was it a small indication of the continued grace of God to that city, to have been blessed so long with such a luminary. We must be content with the short character given of his ministry in the acts of Ignatius, a piece of martyrology first published in 1647 by Archbishop Usher, from two old manuscripts which have stronger marks of credibility than is usual with such compositions.

"He was a man in all things like to the Apostles: as a good governor, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his doctrine and spiritual labour, he opposed himself to the floods of the adversary: he was like a divine lamp illuminating the hearts of the faithful by his exposition of the Holy Scriptures: and lastly, to preserve his church, he scrupled not freely to expose himself to a bitter death." These Acts were compiled by those who went with him from Antioch, and were eye-witnesses of his sufferings.²

Ambition and the lust of power were not stronger features in the character of Cæsar, than the desire of martyrdom was in that of Ignatius. Divine Providence however preserved him for the benefit of the church during the persecution of Domitian, and reserved him to the time of Trajan. This prince being come to Antioch about the tenth year of his reign, in the year 107, in his way to the Parthian war, Ignatius, fearing for the Christians, and hoping to avert the storm by offering himself to suffer in their stead, came voluntarily into the presence of Trajan. I shall deliver the conference, as it stands in the Acts,—a monument of false glory shrouding itself under superstition and ignorance on the one hand; and of true glory, supported by the faith and hope of Jesus, on the other.

Being introduced into the emperor's presence, he was thus addressed by Trajan: "What an impious spirit art thou, both to

transgress our commands, and to inveigle others into the same folly to their ruin?" Ignatius answered, Theophorus ought not to be called so; forasmuch as all wicked spirits are departed far from the servants of God. But if you call me impious because I am hostile to evil spirits, I own the charge in that respect. For I dissolve all their snares, through the inward support of Christ the heavenly King. Traj. Pray, who is Theophorus? Ign. He who has Christ in his breast. Traj. And thinkest thou not that gods reside in us also, who fight for us against our enemies? Ign. You mistake in calling the demons of the nation by the name of gods. For there is only ONE God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; and ONE Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son whose kingdom be my portion! Traj. His kingdom do you say, who was crucified under Pilate? Ign. His, who crucified my sin with its author; and has put all the fraud and malice of Satan under the feet of those who carry him in their heart. Traj. Dost thou then carry him who was crucified within thee? Ign. I do; for it is written; "I dwell in them, and walk in them." Then Trajan pronounced this sentence against him,—“Since Ignatius confesses, that he carries within himself him that was crucified, we command, that he be carried bound by soldiers to Great Rome, there to be thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people.”

The learned Scaliger was puzzled to conceive what could induce Trajan to order his being sent so long a journey for execution. It might seem more natural for him to have directed that he should suffer in the view of his own flock, in order to deter them from Christianity. But Trajan might think the example much more striking and extensive, by using the method which he took. At any rate, Providence undoubtedly displayed, in this way, much more abundantly the honours of the cross, as will appear by what follows. —The doctrine of Union with Christ by faith, now so much ridiculed, appears here in its full glory: And if ever we be called to scenes like these, we shall feel the need of it strongly, and be sensible of the impotence of those schemes of mere human invention, which are often substituted in its room. Christ within can alone support the heart in the hour of severe trial: The boasted moral virtue of proud philosophers is radically defective and unsound.

The scene before us is angust; and the state of Christendom at that time is much illustrated by it. The seven epistles of this great man, undoubtedly genuine as they are, and accurately distinguished from all corrupt interpolations,³ will come in aid to the Acts

¹ Euseb. H. E. c. 22.

² Wake's Epistles.

³ See the Acts of Ignatius; and the preface of the life of Ignatius prefixed to a Tragedy written by Mr. Gambold, which represents the spirit of primitive Christianity. The tragedy, considered as a composition, is unequal, but it contains many beautiful passages.

⁴ Archbishop Usher has reserved, or rather restored, these Epistles to us.

of his martyrdom : By them he being dead, yet speaketh ; and what the gospel can do for men, who really believe it, and feel the energy of the Spirit of its divine author, has not often been more illustriously displayed.

From Antioch he was hurried by his guards to Seleucia : sailing thence, after great fatigue he arrived at Smyrna. While the ship remained in port, he was allowed the pleasure of visiting Polycarp, who was bishop of the Christians there. They had been fellow disciples of St. John ; and the holy joy of their interview may be conceived by such persons as know what the love of Christ is, and how it operates in the breasts of those in whom he dwells. Deputies were sent from the various churches of Asia to attend and console him, and to receive some benefit by his spiritual communications. Bishops, presbyters, and deacons conversed with him : a general convocation seems to have taken place. Four of Ignatius's seven epistles were written from Smyrna,—to the Churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, and Rome.

The Church of Ephesus appears, from his epistle to them, still to have maintained its character of evangelical purity. Their zeal, indeed, had decayed, but was revived : and the rage of persecution was the hot-bed, which reanimated their souls, and made them fruitful again in faith, hope, and charity. The very titles, by which he addresses them, demonstrate what their faith was in common with that of the whole Church at that time ; and abundantly shew the vanity of those, whose dislike of the peculiar truths of Christianity induces them to suppose, that the ideas of predestination, election, and grace, were purely the systematic inventions of Augustin, and unknown to the primitive Christians. We are certain, that St. Paul's epistles, and that particularly addressed to this Church, are full of the same things.

" Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the worthy happy Church in Ephesus of Asia, blessed in the majesty and fulness of God the Father, predestinated before the world to be perpetually permanent in glory, immovable, united, and elect in the genuine suffering for the truth," by the will of the Father, and of Jesus Christ our God, much joy in Jesus Christ, and in his spotless grace." The character, which he gives of their bishop Onesimus, raises our idea of him to a great degree. He calls him " inexpressible in charity, whom I beseech you to love according to Jesus Christ, and all of you to imitate him. Blessed be his name, who has counted you worthy to enjoy such a bishop." With him he honourably mentions also some presbyters or deacons of the Church, " Through whom," says he, " I have seen

you all in love." Onesimus probably was the fugitive slave of Philemon, a growing plant in St. Paul's time.

The unaffected charity and humility of Ignatius deserve our attention. He alone seemed unconscious of his attainments, while the whole Christian world admired him. " I do not, says he, dictate to you, as if I were a person of any consequence. For though I am bound for the name of Christ, I am not yet perfected in Christ Jesus. For now I begin to be a disciple, and speak to you as my teachers. For I ought to be sustained by you in faith, in admonition, in patience, in long suffering. But since charity will not suffer me to be silent concerning you, for this reason I take upon me to exhort you to run together with me according to the mind of God."

Nothing lies more on his heart in all his epistles, than to recommend the most perfect union of the members of the Church, and to reprobate schisms and dissensions. He represents the Christians as all united to Jesus Christ ; all partaking of the same spiritual life. To separate from the Church ; and to lose that subordination in which they stood to their pastors, was to tear in pieces the body of Christ, and to expose themselves to the seductions of those who would draw them from the faith and hope of the gospel. In modern times this language is judged not very consonant to the spirit of liberty, on which we are so apt to felicitate ourselves. And I am persuaded, that the strong manner, in which submission to the Bishop is inculcated, has been the most weighty argument with several persons to encourage themselves in doubts of the authenticity of these pieces. But to doubt the genuineness of these epistles on this account, is to be the slaves of prejudice. Usher, and after him Vossius, have sufficiently distinguished the genuine from the false and the interpolated : and the testimony of antiquity, and the agreement of the epistles, as thus purified, with the quotations of the ancients, render them superior to all exceptions.*

The circumstances in which the Churches were, sufficiently justify the strong expressions of Ignatius. Heretics of various kinds abounded : and their specious artifices were likely to seduce the minds of the weak. What then could be so just a preservative to them, as to stick close to the society of their faithful pastors, the successors of the apostles ? Humility is the guard of real Christian goodness : nothing but the want of it could have tempted them to desire a separation : and in every age the same conduct

* I shall not enter into so large a field of criticism :—whoever has leisure and temper sufficient for the subject, may read with advantage Du Pin's statement of the controversy concerning Ignatius's epistles ; and may thence, I believe, learn all that is needful to be known concerning it.

* Alluding, doubtless, to the errors of the Docters.

toward godly pastors is, doubtless, the true wisdom of the Church : The spirit of schism, of ambition, of self-conceit, disguising itself under the specious pretences of liberty and of conscience, has constantly produced the most fatal effects. Ignatius certainly would not have wished the Ephesians to follow unsound and unfaithful pastors : but much more caution in judging, and a much greater degree of submission to ministers confessedly upright, are doubtless requisite, than many persons in our days are willing to admit.—“ Let no one,” says Ignatius, “ mistake ;—if any man is not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. If the prayer of one or two has so much strength, how much more that of the Bishop and of the whole Church ? He, who separates from it, is proud, and condemns himself : For it is written, God resisteth the proud. Let us study therefore obedience to the Bishop, that we may be subject to God. And the more silent and gentle any one observes the Bishop to be, the more on that account should he reverence him. Every one, to whom the Master commits the stewardship, ought to be received as the Master himself.”—“ Indeed,” says he, “ Onesimus exceedingly commends your godly order :—and that you live according to truth, and that no heresy dwells with you.”—“ Some indeed, with much ostentation, make specious, but fallacious pretensions, whose works are unworthy of God, whom you ought to avoid as wild beasts. For they are raging dogs, biting in secret, whom you should shun, as being persons very difficult to be cured. One physician there is bodily and spiritual, begotten and unbegotten, God appearing in flesh, in immortal true life, both from Mary and from God,—first suffering,—then impassible”—“ I have known some who went from this place,” whom you did not suffer to sow tares among you : you stopped their ears ; so that you would not receive their seed, as being stones of the temple of your Father, prepared for the building of God the Father, lifted up into heavenly places by the engine of Jesus Christ, which is his cross, using the Holy Spirit as a cord.”—“ Yet pray earnestly for other men without ceasing ; for there is hope of conversion in them, that they also may be brought to God. Give them an opportunity to be instructed, at least, by your works.”—“ Without Christ, think nothing becoming ;—in whom I carry about my bonds,—spiritual jewels ;—in which may I be found at the resurrection through your prayer, that my lot may be cast among the Ephesian Christians, who have always harmonised with the Apostles in the power of Jesus Christ !”

“ Ye are partakers of the mysteries with Paul the holy, the renowned, the blessed,

whose footsteps may I follow !” “ Frequent assemblies for thanksgiving and prayer : For when you assiduously attend on these things, the powers of Satan are demolished, and his pernicious kingdom is dissolved by the unanimity of your faith.”—“ Remember me, as Jesus Christ also does you. Pray for the Church in Syria, whence I am led bound to Rome,—the meanest of the faithful who are there.”

I know not how the reader may conceive : but, to my mind, under all the disadvantages of a style bloated with Asiatic tumour, and still more perhaps of a text very corrupt, the ideas contained in these passages of Ignatius's epistle—and indeed the greatest part of it is little inferior to this specimen,—while they represent partly the faith, discipline, and spirit of the Ephesian Church, and partly the charitable and heavenly mind of the author, give the fairest pattern of real Christianity alive in its root and in its fruits. We see here what Christians once were, and what the doctrines of divine grace are. And that happy union, order, and peace, which flourished so long at Ephesus, untainted with heresy, and ever preserving the simplicity of reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ, calls for our commendation of their obedience to their faithful pastors ;—the want of a tender conscientiousness in which matter, so soon dissipates the spirit of the gospel in many modern Churches, and favours very much the growth of a contrary spirit of fickleness, turbulence, and self-importance ; which, at the same time that it feeds the pride of corrupt nature, reduces large societies of Christians into contemptible little parties at variance with one another, and leaves them an easy prey to the crafty and designing.

The letters of Ignatius add something to the stock of history, as they introduce to our acquaintance the two Asiatic Churches of Magnesia and Tralles, which else had been unknown to us. In truth, that whole fertile region of Asia propria seems to have been more thoroughly evangelized than any other part of the world at that period. From the time of St. Paul's labours at Ephesus, “ when all they, which dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks,” to the martyrdom of Ignatius,—that is for half a century or upwards,—the truth as it is in Jesus was preserved in its purity in these Churches : The opposers of the gospel could gain no footing at all in some of them : In others they made no great, or at least, no abiding impressions : In some the fervour of piety was much declined ; and in others it still retained a considerable strength. A strong sense of the infinite value of Jesus in his Godhead, his priesthood, and his blood, prevailed in this region :

* From Smyrna, I suppose, where the heresy of the Docetæ was more common.

• Acts xix. 10.

Faith and love were fed by the view of the Saviour; and patience in suffering for his name was one of their most common virtues.

Damas, the Bishop of Magnesia, appears to have been a young person, whom Ignatius calls "worthy of God." Eminent grace in persons of tender years was sometimes in the primitive Church distinguished by being raised to the Episcopacy. In his letter to the Magnesians he warns them not to despise his youth, but to imitate the holy Presbyters, who gave place to him, but not to him so properly, as to the Father of Jesus Christ.—"Some persons, indeed, call a man a Bishop, but do every thing independently of him. Such seems to me to have lost a good conscience, because their assemblies are not regulated with steadfastness and Christian order." He mentions also with honour Bassus and Apollonius as Presbyters, and Sotio the deacon, "whose happiness," says he, "may I partake of! because he is subject to the Bishop, as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery, as to the law of Jesus Christ."

Here, as elsewhere, he evidently points out three distinct ranks in the primitive Church,—the Bishop, the Presbyters, and the Deacons. A blind and implicit submission to a hierarchy, however corrupt, worthless, and ignorant, was then unknown. But a just and regular subordination, according to the ranks of men in the Church, was much attended to; and nothing like it, humanly speaking, so much encourages and enables godly pastors to discharge their office with zeal and alacrity. Nor is it difficult to conceive, what was the most customary mode of church-government in those times. In vain, I think, will almost any modern church whatever set up a claim to exact resemblance. Usher's model of reduced Episcopacy seems to come the nearest to the plan of the primitive Churches. At first indeed, or for some time, church governors were only of two ranks, Presbyters and Deacons: At least, this appears to have been the case in particular instances; as at Philippi¹ and at Ephesus:² and the term Bishop was confounded with that of Presbyter. The Church of Corinth continued long in this state; so far as one may judge by Clement's epistle; and thence we may in part account for the continuance of their contentious spirit. As these churches grew numerous, they could never be all assembled in one place: the Presbyters must have ministered to different congregations, though the Church continued one. Toward the end of the first century, all the churches followed the model of the mother-church of Jerusalem, where one of the Apostles was the first Bishop. A settled presidency obtained, and the name

of angel was first given to the supreme ruler, though that of Bishop soon succeeded. That this was the case in the seven churches of Asia, is certain. The address of the charges to him in the book of the Revelation demonstrates his superiority. The Deacon, it is well known, was chosen to administer in sacred employments of an inferior kind. These three ranks appear to have been general in the former part of this century through the Christian world.

It has been an error common to all parties, to treat these lesser matters, as if they were *JURE DIVINO*, or like the laws of the Medes and Persians, unalterable. Could it, however, conveniently be done, it may perhaps be true that a reduced Episcopacy, in which the dioceses are of small extent, as those in the primitive Church undoubtedly were, and in which the president, residing in the metropolis, exercises a superintendancy over ten or twelve Presbyters of the same city and neighbourhood, would bid the fairest to promote order, peace, and harmony.

But the Christian world has been more anxious to support different modes of government, than to behave as Christians ought to do in each of them. A subject of much greater importance is suggested to us by a passage in the epistle to the Magnesians, "As there are two coins, one of God, the other of the world, and each of them is impressed with its own character: the unbelievers are of this world, the believers in love have the character of God the Father through Jesus, into whose sufferings if we are unwilling to die, his life is not in us." Thus does Ignatius call our attention to the grand distinction of men into two sorts before God; of which whoever has felt the force, will be little solicitous concerning other distinctions.

Let us hear Ignatius's testimony to the Deity of Christ, and to justification by his grace through faith, and to the constant influences of the Holy Spirit: And we may observe at the same time, how the Jewish leaven of self-righteousness had not ceased, to attempt at least, to darken and to corrupt these essentials of the gospel. The religion of the Jews, indeed, must have been at this time in a very low state; yet the same Pharissism is so congenial to the human mind, that ministers in all ages will see occasion to warn their people against it, as Ignatius did.

"Be not deceived with heterodox opinions, nor old unprofitable fables. For if we still live according to Judaism, we confess that we have not received grace. For the divine prophets lived according to the gospel of Jesus Christ. For this they were persecuted, being inspired by his grace, to assure the disobedient, that there is one God, who manifested himself by Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Eternal Word. If then they have cast off indeed their old principles, and are

¹ Philippi. I.

² Acts xx. 17.

comes to a new hope in Christ, let them no longer observe the Jewish Sabbath, but live according to the resurrection of the Lord,^a in whose resurrection also is ensured, by him and by his death, which some deny;—through whom and by whom we have received the mystery of believing; and on account of this we endure, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ our only teacher. How can we live without him, whose disciples even the prophets were; for in spirit they expected him to be their teacher?—Let us not then be insensible of his loving-kindness: For if he measured to us according to what we have done, we should be ruined. Therefore being his disciples, let us learn to live according to Christianity: He who follows any other name than this, is not of God. Lay aside then the old leaven, and be transferred into a new leaven, which is Jesus Christ.—For Christianity is not converted to Judaism, but Judaism to Christianity, that every tongue confessing God might be gathered together.—These things I warn you, my beloved, not because I have known some of you thus ill disposed; but, as the least of you, I am willing to admonish you, that ye fall not into the snares of vain-glory, but that ye may be well assured of that nativity, suffering, and resurrection, during the government of Pontius Pilate, of which literally and really Jesus Christ was the subject, who is our hope, from which may none of you be turned aside!—I know that ye are not puffed up; for ye have Jesus Christ in yourselves, and the more I praise you, the more I know that ye will be lowly minded.”—Beautiful view of their genuine humility!

“Steady then to be confirmed in the doctrines of the Lord and the Apostles, that in all things which ye do, ye may have good success in flesh and spirit, in faith and love, in the Son, and the Father, and the Spirit.—Knowing that ye are full of God, I have briefly exhorted you. Remember me in your prayers, that I may come to God, and to the Church in Syria, of which I am unworthy to be called a Member. For I need your united prayer in God, and your charity, that the Church in Syria may be thought worthy to partake of the dew of heavenly grace through your Church. The Ephesians at Smyrna, whence I write, together with Polycarp, Bishop of the Smyrneans, and the rest of the Churches in the honour of Jesus Christ, salute you: They live as in the presence of the glory of God, as ye do also, who have refreshed me in all things: Continue strong in the concord of God:—Possess a spirit of union in Jesus Christ.”

From Smyrna he wrote also to the Church of Tralles, the Bishop of which was Poly-

bius, “who so rejoiced with me,” says he, “that I beheld all your multitude in him. Receiving therefore your divine benevolence through him, I seemed actually to find you, as I have known you to be, followers of God. For since ye are subject to the Bishop as to Jesus Christ, you appear to me to live; not after man, but after Jesus Christ; who died for us, that believing in his death you might escape death.”

In what follows we have an intimation of the weak and infant state of this Church; which, though sound, had probably not been so long planted as the rest. And the martyr seems to express some consciousness of superior attainments and gifts, but checked with deep humility.

“I have a strong favour of God; but I take a just measure of myself, lest I perish by boasting. For now I must more abundantly fear, and not attend to those who would inflate me with pride.—I love indeed to suffer, but do not know whether I am worthy.—I need gentleness of spirit, by which the prince of this world is subdued. Cannot I write to you of heavenly things?—Ye are infants; and I fear lest I should hurt you:—I fear lest, through incapacity of receiving stronger meat, ye should be injured in your spiritual growth.”—He goes on to guard them against schisms and heresies, to remind them of the foundation of the gospel, Christ and him crucified; and, in his usual manner, to recommend obedience to their pastors: He modestly thus concludes,—“As yet I am not out of the reach of danger; but the Father is faithful in Jesus Christ, to fulfil my petition and yours, in whom may we be found blameless!”

The subject of his letter to the Roman Christians was, to treat them not to use any methods for his deliverance. He had the prize of martyrdom before him, and he was unwilling to be robbed of it. He speaks with uncommon pathos;

“I fear your charity, lest it should injure me. It will be easy for you to do what you wish: But, it will be difficult for me to glorify God, if I should be spared through your intreaties. If you be silent in my behalf, I shall be made partaker of God; but if you love to retain me in the flesh, I shall again have my course to run.—I write to the Churches and signify to them all, that I die willingly for God, unless you prevent me: I beseech you, that you shew not an unreasonable benevolence toward me: Suffer me to be the food of beasts, by which means I shall attain to the kingdom of God. Rather encourage the wild beasts, that they may become my sepulchre; that nothing of my body may be left; that I may give no trouble to any one, when I fall asleep.—From Syria to Rome, I fight with wild beasts—in human form,—by land and sea, by night and day,

^a *Εσπερον Σάββατον*—A manifest intimation to them to observe the Lord's Day.

chained to ten leopards, who are made even worse by kind treatment. By their injuries I learn the more to be a disciple of Jesus,—yet am I not hereby justified. May I enjoy the real wild beasts, which are prepared for me: May they exercise all their fierceness upon me! I will encourage them, that they may assuredly devour me, and not use me as some, whom they have feared to touch. But if they will not do it willingly, I will provoke them to it:—Pardon me,—I know what is good for me. Now I begin to be a disciple: nor shall anything move me, of things visible and invisible:—Let fire and the cross, let the companies of wild beasts, let breaking of bones and tearing of limbs, let the grinding of the whole body, and all the malice of the Devil come upon me; be it so, only may I enjoy Jesus Christ! All the ends of the world, and the kingdoms of it will profit me nothing: it is better for me to die for Jesus Christ, than to reign over the ends of the earth: Him I seek who died for us: Him I desire who rose again for us: He is my gain laid up for me:—Suffer me to imitate the Passion of my God. If any of you have Him within you, let him conceive what I feel, and let him sympathize with me, and know what a conflict I have. The prince of this world wishes to corrupt my purpose toward God: Let none of you present assist him: My worldly affections are crucified: The fire of God's love burns within me; and cannot be extinguished: It lives: It speaks, and says "Come to the Father." I have no delight in the bread that perisheth, nor in the pleasures of this life: I long for the bread of God; the flesh of Jesus Christ of the seed of David: and I desire to drink his blood,—incorruptible love."

Certainly no words can express in a stronger manner the intenseness of spiritual desire: and one is disposed to look down with contempt and pity on the magnanimity of secular heroes and patriots, as compared with it. Yet I have some doubt, whether all this flame, strong and sincere as it unquestionably was, had not something mixed with it by no means of so pure a kind. For I would not carry the reader's admiration or my own beyond the limits of human imbecility. Ought not the Roman Christians to have endeavoured to save Ignatius's life by all honest means? Has any man a right to hinder others from attempting to save the life of the innocent?—or, will his intreaties give them a right to be as indifferent for his preservation as he himself is? Ought not every man, however prepared for death, and preferring it, if God please, to use all possible methods, consistent with a good conscience, to preserve his life?

I cannot answer these queries to the advantage of Ignatius's determination. Was not his desire of martyrdom excessive? If

he was wrong, it was doubtless a mistake of judgment. I fear the example of Ignatius did harm in this respect in the Church. Martyrdom was, we know, made too much of in the third century:—so hard is it to be kept from all extremes:—Ours are generally of the opposite kind.

These reflections are suggested, in part, by the example of St. Paul. He, indeed, "would go to Jerusalem," though he knew he should be bound. But the certainty of death was not before his eyes, and therefore his resolution, in this case, is not similar to that of Ignatius. As for the rest, he took no pains to dissuade others from saving his life: He took pains to save it himself: He blames his friends at Rome for deserting him: And that eagerness for martyrdom which Ignatius expresses, I see neither in Paul nor in any of the Apostles. They rather refer themselves calmly to the will of God in things which concern themselves. On the whole, there appears in Ignatius, the same zeal for God and love to Jesus Christ, and the same holy contempt of earthly things, which was so eminent in the Apostles; but, I suspect, not an equal degree of calm resignation to the Divine Will.

The time which he was allowed to spend at Smyrna, in company with his beloved Polycarp and other friends, must have been highly agreeable to him. But his keepers were impatient of their long stay: the reasons were, most probably, of a maritime nature. The season, however, for the public spectacles at Rome was advancing, and, perhaps, they were afraid of not arriving in time. They now set sail for Troas, where, at his arrival, he was refreshed with the news of the persecution ceasing in the Church of Antioch. He had been attended hither by Burrhus, the deacon of Polycarp; and him he dispatched with an epistle to the Philadelphians, by way of return for the visit which their Bishop had paid him at Troas. For here also several churches sent their messengers to visit and to salute him: and Providence so far restrained the inhumanity of his guards, that he was allowed to have intercourse with them.—He wrote three epistles more at this place.

The Philadelphians, from his account, were still favoured with the same Spirit of grace, by which they had been already so honourably distinguished among the seven churches of Asia. He recommends, as usual, unity, concord, obedience;—not that he had found any thing amiss in them, in these respects.

One may form some idea of the manner in which these primitive Christians enjoyed the grace of God, and admired and loved it, as it appeared in one another, by his way of speaking of the Philadelphian Bishop, whose name is not given to us, "whom, says he, I

know to have obtained the ministry, not by any selfish or worldly means or motives, for the common good of saints; nor through vain-glory; but from the love of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. I am perfectly charmed with his meekness: When silent, he exhibits more power than vain speakers."

He recommends to them to preserve an unity in the administration of the Lord's Supper: "For there is one body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the unity of his blood; one altar, as also one Bishop, with the Presbytery and the Deacons my fellow-servants.—Whatever ye do, do all according to the will of God."

The firmness of Christian faith, and his zeal against the spirit of self-righteousness, are observable in the following passage: "If any interpret Judaism to you, hear him not. For it is better to hear the gospel from a circumcised person, than Judaism from an uncircumcised one. But if both speak not of Jesus Christ, they are to me pillars and sepulchres of the dead, on which are written only the names of men.—The objects dear to me are Jesus Christ, his cross, his death, his resurrection, and the faith which is in him; by which I desire, through your prayer, to be justified." He begs them to send a Deacon to Antioch, to congratulate his people on the cessation of persecution. Toward the conclusion he speaks of Philo, the deacon from Cilicia, who ministered to him, together with Agathopos a choice saint, who renouncing the world, had followed him from Syria.

He wrote also from Troas to the Smyrnesians, and his commendations of them are consonant to the character they bear in the book of the Revelation. They had weathered the storm of persecution, which was there predicted, and had probably enjoyed the ministry of Polycarp from St. John's time. The most striking thing in this epistle, is the zeal with which he warns them against the Doctrines. In his view the evil of their heresy consisted in taking away the atoning blood of Christ, and the hope of a blessed resurrection:—Let modern Divines hear him, and be instructed. "I glorify Jesus Christ our God, who hath given you wisdom. For I understand, that you are perfect in the immoveable faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; who REALLY was of the seed of David according to the flesh and born of a virgin REALLY;—who REALLY suffered under Pontius Pilate.—For these things he suffered for us, that we might be saved. And he REALLY suffered; as also he TRULY raised up himself: not as some infidels say that he seemed to suffer.—I forewarn you of those beasts, who are in the shape of men; whom you ought not only not to receive, but if possible not even to meet with. Only you

ought to pray for them.—If they may be converted,—which is a difficult case.—But Jesus Christ, our true life, has the power of this."

—A humble and thankful sense of the unspeakable value of Christ, leads naturally to this charity, and the want of it leaves men always, under the appearance of candour, to a cruel insensibility of heart and an undistinguishing scepticism. It seems, that these heretics, with the usual artifices of such persons, laboured to work themselves into the good graces of Ignatius. He sees through their designs, and says,—“for what does it profit me, if any man commend me, and yet blaspheme my Lord, denying him to have come in the flesh?—They separate from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the body of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who suffered for our sins.—They who contradict the gift of God, die in their reasonings.”—Union with the Bishop he strenuously insists on. “It is not lawful without the Bishop; to baptize, or to make a love feast.”

We see the practice of true Christians in those times. They carefully separated themselves from heretics: they beheld their views with horror: they stuck close to Christ.—His Godhead, Manhood, Atonement, Priesthood, were inestimably precious in their eyes. They could not allow those to be Christians at all, who denied the fundamentals: In fine, they preserved order and close connection with their pastors: they did nothing in religion without them.—These were the means of protecting truth among them: and the long course of evangelical prosperity in these Churches, under God, may be ascribed to the use of these means.

One letter only remains to be mentioned,—that to Polycarp.—It contains a just picture of pastoral integrity, wisdom, and charity: The whole of it deserves to be studied by all ministers. The more holy any Pastor is, the more will he be sensible of the need of divine wisdom and strength.—The disadvantages in which a poor sinful worm is involved, who has to contend against the united powers of the world and the devil, amidst the corrupt workings of his own nature, the open opposition of the profane, and the faults of God's own people, cannot even be conceived by a mere secular Clergy, intent only on ease and preferment, or, at best, on literary indulgences and external decorum: as little will they be conceived by those ambitious and turbulent teachers, who are so swallowed up in political dreams, as to forget that Christ's kingdom is not of this world.

“I exhort thee, by the grace with which thou art clothed, to apply thyself to thy course of duty; and to admonish all, that they may all be saved. Do justice to thy station in all diligence both temporal and spiritual: Be studious of that best of blessings,

unity: Bear with all, as also the Lord doth with thee: Bear with all in charity, as indeed thou also dost. Find time for prayer without ceasing: Ask for more understanding than thou hast at present: Watch,—and possess a spirit ever attentive: Speak to each separately, as Almighty God shall enable thee to do: Bear with the diseases of all, as a perfect combatant:—The more labour, the more reward.—If thou love only the obedient disciples, thou evidencest no grace: Rather bring into orderly subjection the turbulent through meekness: Every wound is not cured by the same method of application: Watch as a divine wrestler: Thy theme is immortality and eternal life.—Let not those who seem experienced Christians, and are yet unsound in the faith, stagger thee: Stand firm as an anvil continually struck. It is the character of a great wrestler to be mangled,—and yet to conquer:—Be more studious than thou art: Consider the times; and expect him who is above all time, who is unconnected with time, the Invisible One made visible for us,—the impassible, but passable for us; who bore all sorts of sufferings for us.—Let not widows be neglected: Next to the Lord do thou take care of them: Let nothing be done without thy cognizance: Do thou nothing without the mind of God.—Let assemblies be more frequently held: Seek out all by name: Despise not slaves of either sex; yet let them not be puffed up, but serve more faithfully to the glory of God, that they may obtain a better liberty from God: Let them not desire to be set at liberty at the charge of the Church, lest they be found slaves of lust.—If any can remain in chastity for the honour of the Lord, let them do so without boasting. If they boast, they are lost: and if the man set himself up above the Bishop, he is lost. It becometh the married to enter into that connection with the consent of the Bishop, that the marriage may be after the will of God, and not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh.”

From *Troas* Ignatius, being brought to *Neapolis*, passed by *Philippi* through *Macedonia*, and that part of *Epirus*, which is next to *Epidamnus*. Having found a ship in one of the sea-ports, his conductors sailed over the *Adriatic*; and thence, entering into the *Tuscan sea*, and passing by several islands and cities, at length they came in view of *Puteoli*, which being shewn to him, he hastened to go forth, desirous to tread in the steps of the Apostle Paul; but a violent wind arising would not permit him to accomplish this design. His attendants, the related of the martyrdom, say, that the wind then became favourable for one day and night;—and that they were hurried on contrary to their wishes: THEY sorrowed at the thought of being separated from him: but were rejoiced in the prospect of soon leaving

the world and departing to his Lord, whom he loved:—They sailed into the Roman-port *Ostia*; and when the impure sports were at an end, the soldiers began to be offended with his slowness; but the bishop joyfully complied with their hastiness. *Ostia* was some miles from *Rome*; and he was met by the Roman Christians, who intimated their strong desire for his preservation. Some of them probably had influence with the great; and they were willing to try it: *Ignatius*, however, was inflexible. He was brought to *Rome*, and presented to the Prefect of the city.

When he was led to execution he was attended by a number of the brethren, and was allowed to join in prayer with them. And he prayed to the Son of God^b in behalf of the Churches,—that he would put a stop to the persecution, and continue the love of the brethren toward each other. He was then led into the amphitheatre, and speedily thrown to the wild beasts. He had here also his wish: The beasts were his grave: A few bones only were left, which the deacons gathered, carefully preserved, and afterwards buried at *Antioch*.

The writers thus conclude. “We have made known to you both the day and the time of his martyrdom,—that being assembled together according to that time, we may jointly commemorate the magnanimous martyr of Christ, who trode under-foot the devil, and completed the course which he had devoutly wished in Christ Jesus our Lord, by whom and with whom all glory and power be to the Father with the blessed Spirit for ever. Amen.”

Usher has preserved, or rather restored to us also an epistle of *Polycarp* to the *Philippians*. It breathes the same spirit as those of his fellow-disciple, but has less pathos and vigour of sentiment. Citations from it will be needless.—He begs the *Philippians* to communicate to him what they knew of *Ignatius*, whom they had seen at *Philippi*, after his departure from *Smyrna*. We hence see how the Churches then formed one large fraternity, abstracted from partial views of supporting little factions and interests. He exhorts them to obey the word of righteousness, and to exercise all patience, which they had seen exemplified in *Ignatius*, and in others among themselves, and in *Paul* himself, and the rest of the Apostles: for these loved not this present world, but him, who died and was raised again by God for us. By his account it appears, that the *Philippians* still retained the Christian spirit.—One of the Presbyters, *Valens*, together with his wife, had shined through *carelessness*.—Would to God such spots in the pastoral character were as singular in our times!

^b I use the expression of the Acts: let the reader make the obvious inference for himself.

Polyarp beautifully expresses his charitable concern for them, and exhorts them, in affectionate sympathy, to endeavour to restore their spiritual health.

These facts and observations throw some light on the persecution of Trajan, on the spirit of Christians so far as it can be collected at that time, on the martyrdom of Ignatius, and on the signal glory which God was pleased to diffuse around it among the Churches.

CHAPTER II.

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANS DURING THE REIGNS OF ADRIAN AND ANTONINUS PIUS.

TRAJAN died in the year 117. The latter part of his reign had been employed in his great military expedition into the East, whence he lived not to return. His exploits and triumphs fall not within my province:—I have no concern with him except in that line, in which to a Christian he must appear to the greatest disadvantage; and out of which, it were heartily to be wished, that he had ever given any evidence of a desire to remove. His successor, Adrian, appears not to have issued any persecuting edicts. But the iniquity of his predecessor survived; and Adrian's silent acquiescence for a time, gave it sufficient scope to exert itself in acts of barbarity.

In the mean time the gospel spread more and more. A number of Apostolical persons demonstrated by their conduct, that the Spirit, which had influenced the Apostles, rested upon them. Filled with divine charity, they distributed their substance to the poor, and travelled into regions, which, as yet, had not heard the sound of the gospel: and having planted the faith, they ordained pastors, committed to them the culture of the new ground, and then passed into other countries. Hence, numbers through grace embraced the doctrine of salvation, at the first hearing, with such alacrity.* It is natural to admire here the power of the Holy Spirit of God in the production of so pure and charitable a temper; to contrast it with the illiberal selfishness too prevalent even among the best in our days; and to regret how little is done for the propagation of the gospel through the world, by nations whose aids of commerce and navigation are so much superior to those enjoyed by the ancients.—One advantage those Christians possessed indeed, which we have not: They were all one body, one Church, of one name, and cordially loved one another as Brethren: The attention to fundamentals, to real Christianity was not dissipated by schismatic peculiarities, nor

was the body of Christ rent in pieces by factions: There were indeed many heretics; but real Christians admitted them not into their communities: the line of distinction was drawn with sufficient precision; and a dislike of the person or offices of Christ, and of the real spirit of holiness, discriminated the heretics; and Separation from them, while it was undoubtedly the best mark of charity to their souls, tended to preserve the faith and love of true Christians in genuine purity.

Among these holy men Quadratus was much distinguished. He succeeded Publius in the bishopric of Athens, who had suffered martyrdom either in this or in the foregoing reign. He found the flock in a dispersed and confused state:⁴ Their public assemblies were deserted: their zeal was grown cold and languid: their lives and manners were corrupted; and they seemed likely to apostatize from Christianity. Quadratus laboured to recover them with much zeal and with equal success.⁶ Order and discipline were restored, and with them the holy flame of godliness. One of the strongest testimonies of these things, is the account which the famous Origen, in the second book of his treatise against Celsus, gives of the Athenian Church. While this great man is demonstrating the admirable efficacy of Christian faith on the minds of men, he exemplifies his positions by this very Church of Athens, on account of its good order, constancy, meekness, and quietness:—He represents it as infinitely superior in these respects to the common political assembly in that city, which was factious and tumultuary:—He affirms that it was evident, that the worst parts of the Church were better than the best of their popular assemblies: This is a very pleasing testimony to the growth of Christianity, since the time that a handful of seed was sown there by St. Paul: and let the testimony of so penetrating and sagacious an observer as Origen be considered, as one of the many proofs that might be given of the happy effect which real Christianity has on human society. To a mind not intoxicated with vain ideas of secular glory, the Christian part of Athens must appear infinitely more happy and more respectable, than that commonwealth ever had been in the meridian of its glory.—But we hope in future pages to give much stronger proofs of the advantages derived to society from the gospel.

In the sixth year of his reign, Adrian came to Athens, and was initiated in the Elusian mysteries. This Prince was remarkably fond of Pagan institutions; and by this very circumstance demonstrated a spirit extremely foreign to Christianity. The persecutors were proceeding with sanguinary vigour,

⁴ Euseb. book iv. chap. xxii.

⁶ Cave's life of Quadratus.

* Euseb. book iii. chap. xxxiii.

when Quadratus, at length, presented an apology to the Emperor, in which he defended the gospel from the calumnies of its enemies; and in which he particularly took notice of our Saviour's miracles, his curing of diseases, and raising of the dead,—some instances of which, he says, namely, of persons raised from the dead, were alive in his time.

Aristides, a Christian writer at that time in Athens, addressed himself also to Adrian in an apology on the same subject. The good sense of the Emperor at length was roused to do justice to his innocent subjects. The apologies of the two writers may be reasonably supposed to have had some effect on his mind: Yet a letter from Serenius Granius, Proconsul of Asia, may be conceived to have moved him still more. He wrote to the Emperor, "that it seemed to him unreasonable, that the Christians should be put to death, merely to gratify the clamours of the people, without trial, and without any crime proved against them." This seems the first instance of any Roman Governor daring publicly to suggest ideas contradictory to Trajan's iniquitous maxims, which inflicted death on Christians as such, abstracted from any moral guilt. And it seems to me a sufficient proof, that the severe sufferings of Christians at this period, which appear to have been very remarkable in Asia, were more owing to the active and sanguinary spirit of persecution itself,—which, from Trajan's example, was become very fashionable,—than to any explicit regard to his edicts. We have Adrian's Rescript addressed to Minucius Fundanus, the successor of Granius, whose government seems to have been near to its conclusion, when he wrote to the Emperor.

To Minucius Fundanus.

"I have received a letter written to me by the very illustrious Serenius Granius, whom you have succeeded.—To me then the affair seems by no means fit to be slightly passed over, that men may not be disturbed without cause, and that scycophants may not be encouraged in their odious practices. If the people of the province will appear publicly, and make open charges against the Christians, so as to give them an opportunity of answering for themselves, let them proceed in that manner only, and not by rude demands and mere clamours. For it is much more proper, if any person will accuse them, that you should take cognizance of these matters. If any then accuse, and shew that they actually break the laws, do you determine according to the nature of the crime. But, by Hercules,^f if the charge be a mere calumny, do you estimate the enormity of such calumny, and punish it as it deserves."

^f This is an oath, demonstrating only the earnestness of the writer in his declarations, according to the usual profaneness of men.

Notwithstanding the obscurity, which I find Dr. Jortin and Dr. Lardner suppose to be in this rescript, I cannot but think it clearly shews that it was the intention of the Emperor to prevent Christians from being punished as such. The only reason for hesitation, which I can see, is the inconsistency of it with Trajan's rescript. But it does not appear that Adrian intended the conduct of his predecessor to be the model of his own: and we shall see, in the next reign, still clearer proofs of the equity of Adrian's views. It is but justice due to this Emperor, to free his character from the charge of persecution; and Christians of that or of any age could not object to the propriety of being punished equally with other men, if they violated the laws of the state. But it is the glory of the times we are now reviewing, that no men were more innocent, peaceable, and well-disposed citizens than the Christians. Yet the enmity of men's minds against real godliness,—so natural in all ages,—laid them under extreme disadvantages unknown to others, in vindicating themselves from unjust aspersions: and this forms, indeed, one of the most painful crosses which good men must endure in this life. For example, many heretics, who wore the name of Christians, were guilty of the most detestable enormities: these were indiscriminately charged by the pagans on Christians in general.—This circumstance, in addition to other still more important reasons, rendered them careful in preserving the line of separation distinct: and, by the excellency of their doctrine, and the purity of their lives, they were enabled gradually to overcome all uncandid insinuations.

There is extant also a letter of Adrian,^g in which he speaks of Christian bishops in as respectable a manner as of the priests of Serapis; and of Christians in general as very numerous at Alexandria. Since St. Mark's time therefore, it is evident, though we have scarce any particular accounts, that the gospel must have flourished abundantly in Egypt.

But the same equitable rule of government, which forbade Adrian to punish the innocent Christians, led him to be very severe against the guilty Jews: for now appeared Barchochebas, who pretended to be the star prophesied of by Balaam. This miserable people, who had rejected the true Christ, received the impostor with open arms; and were by him led into horrid crimes; and amongst the rest into a cruel treatment of the Christians.^h The issue of the rebellion was the entire exclusion of the Jews from the city and territory of Jerusa-

^g Vopiscus, b. ii. 67.

^h Justin Martyr, in his first, commonly called second apology, observes that Barchochebas cruelly tortured such Christians as refused to deny and blaspheme Jesus Christ.

ken. Another city was erected in its stead, and called, after the emperor's name, *Ælia*. This leads us to consider how the state of the Mother-church of Jerusalem was affected by this great revolution. The Christian Jews, previous to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, as it has been observed, had retired to Pella, a little town beyond Jordan, inhabited by Gentiles: The unexpected retreat of Cestius had given them this opportunity of effecting their escape. How long they continued here, is uncertain. They must, however, have returned before Adrian's time, who, coming to Jerusalem 47 years after the devastation, found there a few houses and a little Church of Christians built on mount Sion. Here the Church of Jerusalem kept their solemn assemblies, and seemed to have acquired a splendid accession by the conversion of Aquila, the emperor's kinsman, whom he made governor and overseer of the new city. But as he continued to pursue his magic and astrological studies, he was excluded from the Church.—A strong proof that the Mother-church still retained a measure of its pristine purity and discipline!—Corrupt churches are glad to retain persons of eminence in their communion, however void of the spirit of the gospel.—Aquila, incensed, apostatized to Judaism, and translated the Old Testament into Greek.¹

Eusebius, b. iv. c. 5. gives us a list of the bishops who successively presided in Jerusalem. The first was the Apostle James, the second Simeon; both whose histories have been recorded. He mentions thirteen more; but we have no account of their characters or actions. During all this time something judaical seems to have continued in their practice; though Jewish ideas would naturally decay by degrees. The revolution under Adrian, at length put a total end to the Jewish Church, by the extirpation and banishment of this people.—To such outward changes is the Church of Christ subject: a new Church, however, arose in *Ælia*, of the Gentiles, whose bishop was named Mark.

Adrian, after a reign of twenty-one years, was succeeded by Antoninus Pius, who appears to have been, at least in his own personal character and intentions, always guiltless of Christian blood. It was now very difficult for the enemies of Christ to support their persecuting spirit, with any tolerably specious pretensions: The abominations of heretics, whom ignorance and malice will ever confound with real Christians, furnished them with some: Probably these were much exaggerated: but, whatever they were, the whole Christian name was accused of them. They were charged with incest, and the devouring of infants; and thus a handle was afforded for the barbarous treat-

ment of the best of mankind; till time detected the slanders, and men became at length ashamed of affecting to believe what was in its own nature improbable, and was supported by no evidence. It pleased God at this time to endow some Christians with the power of defending his truth by the manly arms of rational argumentation. Justin Martyr presented his first apology to the emperor Antoninus Pius, about the third year of his reign, A. D. 140. He was of that class of men who, in those days, were usually called philosophers. His conversion to Christianity, his views and spirit, his labours and sufferings, will deserve to be considered in a distinct chapter. Suffice it here to say, that the information and arguments, which his first apology contained, were not in vain. Antoninus was a man of sense and humanity. Open to conviction, uncorrupted by the vain and chimerical philosophy of the times, he was desirous of doing justice to all mankind. Asia propria was still the scene of vital Christianity and of cruel persecution.—Thence the Christians applied to Antoninus; and complained of the many injuries which they sustained from the people of the country. Earthquakes, it seems, had lately happened; and the pagans were much terrified, and ascribed them to the vengeance of Heaven against the Christians.—We have, both in Eusebius² and at the end of Justin's first apology, the edict sent to the common council of Asia; every line of which deserves attention.

The Emperor to the common council of Asia.

"I am quite of opinion, that the gods will take care to discover such persons. For it much more concerns them to punish those who refuse to worship them than you, if they be able. But you harass and vex the Christians, and accuse them of Atheism and other crimes, which you can by no means prove. To them it appears an advantage to die for their religion, and they gain their point, while they throw away their lives, rather than comply with your injunctions. As to the earthquakes, which have happened in past times, or lately, is it not proper to remind you of your own dependency, when they happen;—and to desire you to compare your spirit with theirs, and observe how serenely they confide in God? In such seasons you seem to be ignorant of the gods, and to neglect their worship: You live in the practical ignorance of the supreme God himself, and you harass and persecute to death those who do worship him. Concerning these same men some others of the provincial governors wrote to our divine father Adrian, to whom he returned answer,—“That they should not be molested, unless they appeared to attempt something against the Roman

¹ Cave's life of Simeon.

² B. iv. 11, 12, 13.

government." Many also have signified to me concerning these men, to whom I have returned an answer agreeable to the maxims of my father. But if any person will still persist in accusing the Christians merely as such,—Let the accused be acquitted, though he appear to be a Christian;—and let the accuser be punished."—Set up at Ephesus in the common assembly of Asia.

Eusebius informs us, that this was no empty edict, but was really put in execution. Nor did this emperor content himself with one edict. He wrote to the same purport to the Larissæans, the Thessalonians, the Athenians, and all the Greeks.

As this prince reigned 29 years, such vigorous measures must, after some time at least, have had their effect. And we may fairly conclude that during a great part of this reign the Christians were permitted to worship God in peace. A few remarks on the conduct of this prince, and on the facts which appear on the face of his edict, may be judged not improper.

1. There are, it seems, some instances of princes, even in ancient history, not unacquainted with the just principles of religious liberty, which are now more generally understood. The most intelligent legislator, in any age, never understood the natural rights of conscience better than Antoninus Pius. He saw that Christians, as such, ought not to be punished. His subjects, bigoted and barbarous, were far from thinking so; and it was not till after repeated edicts and menaces, that he forced them to cease from persecution.

2. In the conduct of this emperor one may observe how far human nature can advance in moral virtue by its natural resources, while it remains destitute of the grace of God and the superior principle of holiness. If the advocates of natural morality, considered as abstracted from Christianity, were to fix on a character the most able to support the weight of their cause, it would be their interest to put it into the hands of Antoninus Pius. He would defend it, not with pompous systems and declamatory flourishes, but by an amiable, generous, and magnanimous conduct. I have been astonished at the character that is recorded of him. Doubtless a more distinct and explicit detail of his life would lessen our admiration. We have not the opportunity of knowing him so thoroughly as we do Socrates and Cicero. The former, by the writings of his scholars, the latter by his own, are known as minutely as if they were our contemporaries. Could the emperor be as accurately scrutinized, possibly something of the supercilious pride of the Grecian, or of the ridiculous vain-glory of the Roman patriot, might appear. They are both allowed to be very eminent patterns of moral virtue; but yet, with all the disad-

vantages of such imperfect historians as Victor and Julius Capitolinus, they must concede the palm to Antoninus. Despotic power, in his hands, seems to have been only an instrument of doing good to mankind. His temper was mild and gentle in a very high degree; yet the vigour of his government was as striking, as if he had been of the most keen and irritable disposition. He consulted the welfare of his subjects with great diligence: He attended to all persons and things with as minute an exactness, as if his own private property had been concerned.¹—Scarcely any fault is ascribed to him, but that of a temper excessively inquisitive. His successor, the second Antoninus, owns, that he was religious without superstition; and in particular, that he was not superstitious in the worship of the Gods. This we have in his Stoical meditations, still extant.² We cannot therefore doubt but that a person of this stamp would find opportunities of knowing what Christianity was. He certainly did know something of it, and he approved of the moral conduct of Christians. He gives them the most honourable character, has no fear of them as disloyal or turbulent, and makes comparisons between them and Pagans to the advantage of the former. From an expression in the edict,—“if they be able,”—one might be tempted to suspect, that he had very little INTERNAL respect for the gods. Were there no God, no Divine Providence, and no future state, the virtue of this man would doubtless be as complete, and as consistent as so absurd an hypothesis will permit:—but his case shews, that it is possible, by the united influence of good sense and good temper, for a man to be extremely beneficent to his fellow-creatures, without due regard to his Maker. Surely—if the holiness of a truly converted Christian, and the mere moral virtue of a “natural man,” were the same things,—Antoninus ought to be esteemed a Christian.—Yet it does not appear that he ever seriously studied the gospel.—A sceptical carelessness and indifference, not unlike that temper, which, under the names of candour and moderation, has now overspread the face of Europe, appears to have possessed the mind of this amiable prince: and, while he attended to the temporal advantages of mankind, and felicitated himself on his good actions, he seemed to forget that he had a soul accountable to the Supreme Being; and scarcely to think it possible, that it should have any guilt to answer for before HIM. The evil of such a contempt of God is what mankind are of all things least inclined to discern: Yet it is the evil of all others the most vehemently opposed in scripture under the several branches of idolatry,

¹ Jull. Capitol. Vit. Ant. chap. 7. See Lardner's Collections, chap. xiv.

² = Book vi. c. 30.

unbelief, self-righteousness, and pride. No wonder;—for, without a knowledge of this evil, and a humble sense of guilt in consequence, the very nature of the gospel itself cannot be understood. The conclusion resulting from this consideration is, that godliness is perfectly distinct from mere morality: The latter indeed always flourishes where godliness is; but it is capable of a separate existence.

3. The edict of this good emperor is a singularly valuable testimony in favour of the Christians of that time. It appears that there were then a race of men devoted to the service of Christ, ready to die for his name and for his religion: These men exemplified the superior worth of their religion by a superior probity and innocence of manners, so as to appear the best of subjects in the opinion of an emperor of the highest candour, intelligence, and acute observation. They were not inferior to the most excellent of the heathens in morality: and they possessed, further,—what this emperor confesses their enemies were void of,—a sincere spirit of reverence for the Supreme Being,—an unaffected contempt of death,—and that to which Stoicism pretends,—a real serenity of mind under the most pressing dangers;—and all this grounded on an unshaken confidence in God.—We cannot but hence conclude—that the effusion of the Spirit of God, which began at the feast of Pentecost, was still continued. Christians were SO IN POWER, AND NOT IN NAME ONLY, by the testimony of an heathen prince: and those, who would substitute the virtue or the morality of fallen man in the place of the religion of Christians, would do well to consider, that sound virtue and sound morality themselves know no support like that of Christianity.—This divine religion comprehends every possible good thing that can be found in all others; and has, over and above, its own PECULIAR virtues:—It possesses a fund of consolation and an energy of support under the prospect of death itself; and it points out the only safe and sure road to a blissful immortality.

CHAPTER III.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

THE great man was born at Neapolis in Samaria, anciently called Sichem. His father was a Gentile,—probably one of the Greeks, belonging to the colony transplanted thither: He gave his son a philosophical education.—Justin in his youth travelled for the improvement of his understanding; and Alexandria afforded him all the entertainment which an inquisitive mind could derive from the fashionable studies. The Stoics appear-

ed to him at first the masters of happiness. He gave himself up to one of this sect, till he found he could learn from him nothing of the nature of God. It is remarkable—as he tells us himself,—that his tutor informed him,—this was a knowledge by no means necessary; which fact very much illustrates the views of Dr. Warburton concerning these ancient philosophers: namely, that they were Atheists in reality. He next betook himself to a Peripatetic, whose anxious desire of settling the price of his instructions convinced Justin, that truth did not dwell with him. A Pythagorean next engaged his attention, who, requiring of him the previous knowledge of music, astronomy, and geometry, dismissed him for the present, when he understood that he was unfurnished with those sciences. In much solicitude he applied himself to a Platonic philosopher; and with a more plausible appearance of success from this teacher than from any of the foregoing. He now gave himself to retirement. “As I was walking,” says Justin, “near the sea, I was met by an aged person of a venerable appearance, whom I beheld with much attention. We soon entered into conversation; and upon my professing a love for private meditation; the venerable old man hinted at the absurdity of mere speculation abstracted from practice: This,” continues Justin, “gave occasion to me to express my ardent desire of knowing God, and to expatiate on the praises of philosophy. The stranger by degrees endeavoured to cure me of my ignorant admiration of Plato and Pythagoras: He pointed out the writings of the Hebrew prophets as much more ancient than any of those called philosophers; and he led me to some view of the nature and of the evidences of Christianity:” He added, “Above all things, pray, that the gates of light may be opened to you: for they are not discernible, nor to be understood by any one, except God and his Christ enable a man to understand.” He said many other things to the same effect: He then directed me to follow his advice; and he left me. I saw him no more; but—immediately a fire was kindled in my soul, and I had a strong affection for the prophets and for those men who are the friends of Christ: I weighed within myself the arguments of the aged stranger; and, in the end, I found the divine Scriptures to be the only sure philosophy.”—We have no more particulars of the exercises of his mind in religion. His conversion took place, from this beginning, sometime in the reign of Adrian. But he has shewn us enough to make it evident, that CONVERSION was then looked upon as an inward spiritual work in the soul,—the same work of grace which the Spirit operates at this day on real Christians.

* His dialogue with Trypho, whence the account of his conversion is extracted.

There appear, in his case, an earnest thoughtfulness attended with a strong desire to know God, and also an experimental sense of his own ignorance and of the insufficiency of human resources: Then there appear further,—the providential care of God in bringing him under the means of Christian instruction,—a direction to his soul to pray for spiritual illumination,—the divine hunger created in his heart,—and, in due time, the satisfactory comforts and privileges of real Christianity; which with him was not mere words and declarations; for he says, He found Christianity to have a formidable majesty in its nature, adapted to terrify those who are in the way of transgression, as well as a sweetness, peace, and serenity for those who are conversant in it. He owns in another of his works,* that the example of Christians suffering death so serenely for their faith, moved his mind not a little: This is an obvious consideration, and needs not be insisted on, however worthy it may be the notice of those called Philosophers in any age.—Justin after his conversion still wore the usual philosophic garb, which demonstrates that he retained, perhaps, too great an affection for the studies of his youth:† and if I mistake not, he always preserved a very strong tincture of the spirit of philosophy, though not in such a manner as to prevent his sincere attachment to the gospel.

Coming to Rome in the time of Antoninus Pius, he there wrote a confutation of the heretics; particularly of Marcion, the son of a bishop born in Pontus; who, for lewdness,‡ was ejected from the Church and had fled to Rome, where he broached errors of an Antinomian tendency. It makes no part of my plan to define the systems of heretics; but only to speak of them as they come in my way, with a special reference to the opposition, which they made to the fundamentals of the gospel. That holiness, “without which no man shall see the Lord,” and which it was the great design of Christ to promote, found in this pretended Christian a bitter enemy. Justin, who had tasted of the holy nature of the gospel in his own experience, withstood him both in conversation and by his writings. About the year 140, he published his excellent apology for the Christians, addressed to Antoninus Pius, which, with respect to the Christians, may reasonably be supposed to have had a considerable influence on the political conduct of that prudent Emperor.

It appears from this performance, that it was common to accuse Christians merely as such; and to charge the faults of any persons, who bore the name, on the whole body.

* Apology second, though misnamed the first, in all the copies of Justin.

† Cave's life of Justin.

‡ The truth of this charge against his morals has been disputed, possibly with justice.

—Thus there is no new thing under the Sun.

—The term Christian was matter of obliquity at that time: various other terms of scoff and contempt have been invented since; and it requires no great degree of rational power to shew, as Justin has done completely, the absurdity and inconclusiveness of such methods of attacking religion, whether they be ancient or modern. He takes notice also of the happy effects which the conduct of Christians had then on mankind. “We have many instances,” says he, “to shew the powerful effects of example among men: Many persons have been impressed in favour of the gospel by observing the sobriety and temperance of their neighbours,—or the unparalleled meekness of their fellow-travellers under cruel treatment, or the uncommon integrity and equity of those with whom they transacted business.” These are fresh proofs of the continuance of vital religion in the time of Justin:—A man calling himself a Christian, without any practical power of the religion, would scarcely have then been classed among the brethren. I find also fresh proofs, in this apology, of the strong line of distinction kept up in those days between Christians and heretics. The author observes that the latter were fond of the name of Christians, and yet were not persecuted.—There was nothing in their spirit and conduct that provoked persecution. He takes notice also of the small number of Jewish converts in comparison of the main body of the nation. But this, he observes, was agreeable to the prophecies of the Old Testament. He describes likewise the customs of the primitive Christians in public worship; and in the administration of the Sacraments; in order to show the falsity of the charges generally urged against them.

Not long after his first apology, Justin left Rome and went to Ephesus, where he had a discourse with Trypho the Jew;—the substance of which he has given us in a dialogue. In this work he notices the common calumnies against Christians,—of their eating men,—of their extinguishing the lights,—and of their promiscuous sensuality; but treats these charges as not credited by men of sense and candour among their enemies; and therefore as not meriting a serious confutation.

On his return to Rome, he had frequent contests with Crescens the philosopher,—a man equally remarkable for malignity to Christians, and for the most horrid vices. Justin now presented his second apology to M. Antoninus Philosophus, the successor of Pius, and a determined enemy to Christians: He had conceived hopes of softening his mind toward them, as he had done that of his predecessor;—but in vain. Marcus was their enemy during his whole reign; and they scarcely ever had an enemy more implacable.—The immediate occasion of the second a:

polity, as he himself informs the Emperór, was this :—

"A certain woman at Rome had, together with her husband, lived in extreme prodigality and licentiousness. But on her conversion to Christianity, her own conduct being changed, she endeavoured to persuade her husband also to imitate her example, by representing to him the punishment of eternal fire, which in a future state would be inflicted on the disobedient. But he persisting in his wickedness, she was induced to wish for a separation. By the advice of her friends, she continued, however, to live with him, hoping that in process of time he might be brought to repentance. Upon his coming to Alexandria, he proceeded to greater lengths of wickedness, so that finding the connection now no longer tolerable, she procured a divorce from him. He, not impressed with the happy change which had taken place in her dispositions, and unmoved with her compassionate attempts to rescue him from ruin, accused her of being a Christian. Upon which she presented a petition to you, O *Emperor*, that she might have time to dispose and regulate her household affairs : and she promised that after that was done, she would answer to the charge ;—which petition you granted. The husband, finding his wife to have gained a respite from his malice, diverted it to another object,—to one *Ptolemy*, who had instructed her in Christianity, and who had been punished by *Urbicius* the Prefect of Rome. He persuaded a centurion, his friend, to imprison *Ptolemy* ; and to ask him whether he was a Christian. He, no flatterer or dissembler, ingenuously confessed, and was a long time punished with imprisonment. At last, when he was brought before *Urbicius*, and was asked only this question,—whether he was a Christian, he confessed himself a teacher of the Divine Truth. For no true Christian can act otherwise. *Urbicius*, nevertheless, ordered him to be led to execution : Upon this, a Christian, named *Lucius*, expostulated with him on the absurdity of these proceedings,—on the iniquity of putting men to death merely for a name, abstracted from any one specific charge of guilt ;—a conduct unworthy of Emperors such as *Pius* the last, or *Philosophus* the present,* or of the sacred Senate. "You too appear to me to be of the same sect," was all that the Prefect deigned to reply. *Lucius* confessed that he was ; and was himself led also to execution ; which he bore with triumphant serenity ; declaring that he was now going from unrighteous governors to God his gracious Father and King. A third person was sentenced also to death on the same occasion. And I also," con-

tinues *Justin*, "expect by persons of this sort to be murdered, perhaps by *Crescens* the pretended philosopher. For the name really belongs not to a man who, with a view of pleasing many deceived persons, publicly accuses Christians of Atheism and impiety, though he himself be totally ignorant of their real character. I, *Justin*, have interrogated him, and proved that he is quite unacquainted with the subject. I am willing to undergo an examination before you in company with him. And my questions and his answers will make it evident to yourself, that he knows nothing of our affairs ; or, at least, conceals what he does know."

But *Marcus* was not a man disposed to exercise common justice towards Christians. The philosophic garb was no shield to *Justin*, even in the eyes of an Emperor, who piqued himself on the surname of *Philosopher*. The sincerity of his Christian attachments outweighed every argument and every plausible appearance in his favour. *Crescens* procured him imprisonment for the crime of being a Christian,—the greatest evil of which a human being could be guilty in the eyes of this Emperor. The acts of his martyrdom, which carry more marks of truth than many other martyrologies, give the following account. "He and six of his companions having been apprehended, were brought before *Rusticus* the Prefect,—who, I suppose, had succeeded *Urbicius*,—a person of considerable eminence, and famous for his attachment to Stoicism. He had been tutor to the Emperor, who acknowledges, in the first book of his *Meditations*, his obligations to him on several accounts, and particularly for his teaching him to be of a placable and forgiving temper. This is one instance, among thousands, that it is possible for a man to be strongly impressed with many beautiful ideas of morality, and still to remain an inflexible enemy to the gospel. *Rusticus* undertook to persuade *Justin* to obey the Gods, and to comply with the Emperor's edicts.—The Martyr defended the reasonableness of his religion.—Upon which the Governor inquired in what kind of learning and discipline, he had been educated. He told him, that he had endeavoured to understand all kinds of discipline and had tried all methods of learning, but finding satisfaction in none of them, he at last had found rest in the Christian doctrine, however fashionable it might be to despise it. Wretch ! replies the indignant Magistrate, art thou captivated then by THAT RELIGION ? I am, says *Justin* ; I follow the Christians, and their doctrine is right. "What is their doctrine ?" It is this, we believe the one only God to be the Creator of all things visible and invisible ; and we confess our Lord *Jesus Christ* to be the Son of God ; foretold by the prophets, of old ; and that he is now the Saviour, teacher

* I am aware that the Greek in *Justin* would make it probable that *Pius* was then reigning ; but *Eusebius's* contrary testimony determines me to think otherwise.

* *Cave's* life of *Justin*.

and master of all those who are duly submissive to his instructions, and that he will hereafter be the Judge of mankind.—As for myself, I am too mean to be able to say any thing becoming his infinite Deity: This was the business of the prophets, who, many ages ago, had foretold the coming of the Son of God into the world. “Where do the Christians usually assemble?” The God of the Christians is not confined to any particular place. “In what place do you instruct your scholars?” Justin mentioned the place in which he dwelt, and told him that there he explained Christianity to all who resorted to him. The Prefect having severally examined his companions, again addressed Justin. “Hear thou, who hast the character of an orator, and imaginest thyself to be in the possession of truth. If I scourge thee from head to foot, thinkest thou that thou shalt go to Heaven?” Although I suffer what you threaten, yet I expect to enjoy the portion of all true Christians; as I know that the divine grace and favour is laid up for all such, and shall be so, while the world endures. “Do you think that you shall go to Heaven, and receive a reward?” I not only think so, but I know it, and have a certainty of it which excludes all doubt. Rusticus insisted that they should all go together, and sacrifice to the gods. No man whose understanding is sound, replies Justin, will desert true religion for the sake of error and impiety. “Unless you comply, you shall be tormented without mercy.” We desire nothing more sincerely than to endure tortures for our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be saved. Hence our happiness is promoted; and we shall have confidence before the awful tribunal of our Lord and Saviour, before which, by the divine appointment, the whole world must appear. The rest assented, and said,—“Dispatch quickly your purpose, we are Christians, and cannot sacrifice to idols.” The governor then pronounced sentence,—“As to those, who refuse to sacrifice to the gods, and to obey the imperial edicts, let them be first scourged, and then beheaded according to the laws.” The martyrs rejoiced and blessed God, and being led back to prison, were whipped and afterwards beheaded. Their dead bodies were taken by Christian friends, and decently interred.

Thus slept in Jesus the Christian philosopher Justin, about the year 163, and about the third or fourth year of the reign of Marcus. Like many of the ancient fathers he appears to us under the greatest disadvantage. Works really his have been lost; and others have been ascribed to him; part of which are not his; and the rest, at least, of ambiguous authority. He is the first Christian since the apostles’ days, who added to an unquestionable zeal and love for the gospel the character of a man of learning and philoso-

phy. His early habits were retained; and yet were consecrated to the service of God. This man, surely, should not be suspected of unreasonable impulses and fancies. His religion was the effect of serious and long deliberation: and the very best and most important use which a gentleman and a scholar can make of his rational faculties,—namely,—to determine his choice in religion,—was made by Justin. He examined the various philosophic sects, not merely for the purpose of amusement or ostentation, but to find out God; and in God true happiness: He tried and found them all wanting: He sought him in the gospel: He found him there: He confessed him: He gave up every thing for him: He was satisfied with his choice; and he died in serenity. His persevering in the profession of philosophy might probably have another view besides the gratification of his own taste: He might hope to conciliate the affections of philosophers, and allure them to Christianity. The charity of his heart appears indeed to have been great: He prayed for all men: He declined no dangers for the good of souls; and he involved himself in disputes with philosophers for their benefit, to the extreme hazard of himself. His house was open for the instruction of all who consulted him; though he seems to have never assumed the ecclesiastical character. To draw gentlemen and persons of liberal education to pay attention to Christianity, appears to have been his chief employment. But he found it easier to provoke opposition, and to throw away his own life than to persuade a single philosopher to become a Christian. The danger of learned pride, the vanity of hoping to disarm the enmity of the wise of this world by the most charitable concessions, and the incurable prejudice of the great against the humble religion of Jesus, are much illustrated by his story. So is the victorious efficacy of divine grace, which singled out Justin from a race of men, of all others the most opposite to Christ. We have seen a philosopher persecuted to death; informed against by one of his brethren; condemned by another, and suffering by the authority of an Emperor, who gloried more in the philosophic than in the Imperial name. A man of his learning and sagacity should not rashly be supposed destitute of argument and system in his views. Men of sense will scarce think the ideas of such a person unworthy of their regard.—Let us see then briefly what were Justin’s sentiments in religion. We may possibly be led to conclude that Christian principles may be seriously maintained in consistence with the love of science and letters: though perhaps we may observe some degree of adulteration, which these principles received, by passing through a channel of all others the most unfavourable for the conduct-

ing of their course,—the channel of philosophy.*

It is certain that Justin worshipped Christ as the true God in the full and proper sense of the words. We have seen one testimony of it already in his examination before Rusticus. But let the reader hear his own words. Trypho[†] the Jew finds fault with the Christians on account of this very sentiment. "To me it appears," says he, "a paradox incapable of any sound proof; to say, that this Christ was God before all time; and that then he was made man, and suffered: And to assert that he was any thing more than a man, and of men, appears not only paradoxical, but foolish." "I know," answered Justin, "that it appears paradoxical; and particularly to those of your nation, who are determined neither to know nor do the will of God, but to follow the inventions of your teachers, as God declares of you. However, if I could not demonstrate that he existed before all time, being God the Son of the Maker of the universe, and that he was made man of the virgin; yet, as this personage was shewn by every sort of proof to be the Christ of God, be the question as it may respecting his divinity and humanity, you have no right to deny that he is the Christ of God, even if he were only mere man: you could only say, that I was mistaken in my idea of his character. For there are some who call themselves Christians, who confess him to be the Christ, but still maintain that he is a mere man only, with whom I agree not; neither do most of those who bear that name agree with them; because we are commanded by Christ himself not to obey the precepts of men, but his own injunctions, and those of the holy prophets." "Those," says Trypho, "who say that he was man alone, and that he was in a particular manner anointed, and made Christ, appear to me to speak more rationally than you. For we all expect Christ a man, of men; and that Elias will come to anoint him."—The purport of this whole passage is plain: The GENERAL body of Christians in the second century held the proper Deity of Jesus Christ: They believed that this was a part of Old Testament revelation: and they looked on a small number, who held his mere humanity, to be men who preferred human teachers to divine. They considered the Jews also, the most implacable enemies of Christianity, as choosing to be directed rather by human teachers than by the divine oracles; and as inexcusable in denying the divine mission of Christ, whatever opinion they might have formed of his person.—Let the

* It seems need be repeated, that by this term I mean all along that philosophy of the ancients, which was founded in pride, was chiefly speculative and metaphysical, and at bottom atheistical:—no one objects to those moral maxims of the ancient philosophers, which were in many instances excellent, though defective in principle.

† Dialogue, p. 63.

learned reader judge for himself, by turning to the passage in Justin, whether it will not bear the weight which I have laid upon it.—The testimony of a man so thoughtful, judicious, and honest as Justin, must be decisive, or nearly so;—and therefore must, in a great measure, determine the question much agitated in our times, relative to the opinion of the ancients, concerning the person of Christ.

In another part of the same dialogue,* he speaks of Christ as the God of Israel who was with Moses; and explains his meaning when he said that true Christians regarded what they were taught by the prophets.—In his first apology, he tells the Emperor in WHAT SENSE Christians were Atheists: They did not worship the gods commonly so called, but they[†] worshipped and adored the true God, and his Son, and the prophetic Spirit, honouring them in word and in truth. If those, who call themselves Unitarians, were as candid and impartial as they profess, the controversy concerning the Trinity would be soon at an end.—That the primitive Christians worshipped one God alone, all who espouse the doctrine of the Trinity will allow. Let the Unitarians with equal frankness acknowledge that they worshipped the one God in the three persons just now mentioned; and then we have the Trinity in Unity. Further—Justin uses two terms usually expressive of that worship and adoration, which incommunicably belongs to the Deity.[‡]—But, till there be a disposition in men, without disputation, to humble themselves before divine revelation, neither frankness in concession, nor unity in sentiment is to be expected.

The all-important doctrine of justification he states[§] in the same manner as St. Paul does; believing, that to press the necessity of Mosaic rites on others was to fall from the faith of Christ. The learned reader may see more at large his views of regeneration and forgiveness of all past sins through Christ Jesus,* and how extremely different they were from the nominal Christianity which contents so many persons.

He appears to have had the clearest views of that special illumination, without which no man will understand and relish real godliness. His first unknown instructor had taught him this; and he seems never to have forgotten it. He informs Trypho,—that, for their wickedness, God had hidden from the Jews the power of knowing divine wisdom, except from a remnant, who according to the grace of his compassion were reserved, that their nation might not be like Sodom and Gomorrah.—The eternal punishment of the wicked he avows so plainly, that I shall spare quotations upon that subject.

* P. 56.

† P. 137.

‡ *ἡ ἀκατάκλητος ἡ ἡγεμονία*.

§ Dialogue 62.

* First Apology 15b, 16a, and 68th Dialogue.

In fundamentals he was unquestionably sound: Yet there seems, however, something in his train of thinking, which was the effect of his philosophic spirit; and which produced notions not altogether agreeable to the genius of the gospel. Thus, toward the close of the second apology, he declares that the doctrines of Plato were not heterogeneous to those of Christ; but only NOT ALTOGETHER similar. And he seems to assert, that Plato, and the Stoics, and the Pagan writers, in prose and verse, saw something of truth from the portion of the seed of the Divine Word, which he makes to be the same as the Word, the only begotten Son of God. The reader, who chooses to consult the last folio page of the apology may judge for himself, whether he does not there confound together two things perfectly distinct,—the light of natural conscience which God has given to all men;—and the light of divine grace peculiar to the children of God. Certain it is, that St. Paul who speaks of both, in the epistle to the Romans, always carefully distinguishes them, as of a kind entirely different one from the other. He never allows unconverted men to have any portion at all of that light which is peculiarly Christian: But thus it was that this excellent man seems to have forgotten the guard, which can scarcely be too often repeated, against philosophy. We may see hereafter how mystics and heretics and platonizing Christians jumbled these things together entirely, and what attempts were made by the philosophers to incorporate their doctrine of the *Τὸ ὂν* with the gospel.^a Justin seems, unwarily, to have given them some handle for this: and, if I mistake not, he was the first sincere Christian who was seduced by human philosophy to adulterate the gospel, though in a small degree. It should ever be remembered, that Christian light stands single and unmixed; and will not bear to be kneaded into the same mass with other systems, religious or philosophical.—We may here mark the beginning of the decay of the first SPIRITUAL EFFUSION among the Gentiles, through false wisdom: as, long before,—namely,—from the first council of Jerusalem,—we noticed a similar decay in the Jewish Church, through self-righteousness.

The same prejudice in favour of the instructor of his youth leads him to pay to Socrates a very great compliment, as if that extraordinary man had really known the true God, and had lost his life for attempting to draw men from idolatry.—Whereas almost every line of the narrative left us by his disciples shews, that he was as much an idolater as the rest of his countrymen.—The last

^a An abstruse and mystical opinion, which prevailed very generally among the ancient philosophers, but which it is difficult to make intelligible by any explanation. It differs, however, very little, if at all, from downright Atheism.

words he uttered, it is well known, were entirely idolatrous.—Justin had not learnt as fully as St. Paul would have taught him; that “the world by wisdom knew not God.” In the last page of his *Trypho* there is also a phraseology extremely suspicious. He speaks of a self-determining power in man,^b and uses much the same kind of known reasoning on the obscure subject of free will as has been fashionable since the days of Arminius. He seems to have been the first of all sincere Christians, who introduced this foreign plant into Christian ground. I shall venture to call it foreign till its right to exist in the soil shall be proved from scriptural evidence.—It is very plain that I do not mistake his meaning,—because he never explicitly owns the doctrine of election; though, with happy inconsistency, like many other real Christians, he involved it in his experience, and implies it in various parts of his writings.

But, the stranger, once admitted, was not easily expelled:—The language of the Church was silently and gradually changed, in this respect, from that more simple and scriptural mode of speaking used by Clement and Ignatius: Those primitive Christians knew the doctrine of the Election of Grace, but not the self-determining power of the human will:—We shall see hereafter the progress of the evil, and its arrival at full maturity under the fostering hand of Pelagius.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EMPEROR MARCUS ANTONINUS AND HIS PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS.

He succeeded Pius in the year 161, and appears very soon after to have commenced the persecution against the Christians, in which Justin and his friends were slain. It excites a curiosity, not foreign from the design of this history, to discover what could be the cause of so much enmity against a people, confessedly harmless, in a Prince so considerate, so humane, and, in general, so well-intentioned as Marcus is allowed to have been.—Besides, he acted in this respect directly contrary to the example of his predecessor, whose memory he doubtless much revered, from whose intelligent and investigating spirit he must have derived ample information concerning the Christians, and whom in all other matters of government he imitated so exactly. The fact, however, is certainly so: Marcus Antoninus was, during all his reign, which continued 19 years, an implacable persecutor of Christians; and this not from mere ignorance of their moral character. He knew them,—yet hated them.

^b *Αὐτονομία*.

and showed them no mercy: He allowed and encouraged the most barbarous treatment of their persons; and was yet himself a person of great humanity of temper: just and beneficent to the rest of mankind: He was free from all reproach in his general conduct; and in several parts of it was a model worthy the imitation of Christians.

I think it impossible to solve this phenomenon on any other principles than those by which the enmity of many philosophers of old, and of many devotees and exact moralists of modern times against the Christian religion, is to be explained. The gospel is not only in its own nature distinct from carelessness and dissolute vice, but also from the whole religion of philosophers: I mean of those philosophers who form to themselves a religion from natural and self-devised sources, either in opposition to the revealed word of God, or with the neglect both of that word and of the influence of the Holy Spirit, who is the great agent in applying the scriptures to the heart of man.—In all ages it will be found that the more strenuously men support such a religion, the more vehemently do they hate Christianity. Their religion is pride and self-importance: It denies the fallen state of man, the provision and efficacy of grace, and the glory of God and the Redeemer.—The enmity hence occasioned is obvious.—It must be considered also that Marcus Antoninus was of the Stoical sect,—who carried self-sufficiency to the utmost pitch.

He fancied that he carried God within him. Like most of the philosophers he held the mystical doctrine of the *Te ur*; but he held it in all its detestable impiety and arrogance. With him to be good and virtuous was the easiest thing in the world: It was only to follow nature, and to obey the dictates of the Deity,—that is, of the human soul, which was divine and self-sufficient. He could not with these views be humbled; nor pray earnestly; nor feel his own internal wickedness and misery; nor endure the idea of a Saviour and Mediator.—If, like his predecessor, Pius, he had been contented to be an ordinary person in religion, the humanity of his temper would PROBABLY have led him, as it did the emperor Pius, to have respected the excellent character and virtues of Christians; and he would have felt it his duty to have protected such peaceable and deserving subjects.—I say, PROBABLY; and I express myself with some reserve, because I much doubt, whether he possessed an understanding equally sound with that of Antoninus Pius.—But, be that as it may, the pride of philosophy appears to have been wounded and exasperated. Whoever has attended to the spirit which pervades his twelve Books of Meditations, and duly compared them with the doctrines of the gospel, must acknowledge a total opposition: and

then he will not wonder that Christians suffered from a serious Stoic, what might have been expected only from a flagitious Nero.—Pride and licentiousness are equally condemned by the gospel; and they equally seek revenge.—If this be a true state of the case, the philosophic spirit, explained and stated as above, however differently modified in different ages, will always be inimical to the gospel; and the most decorous moralists belonging to the class of which we are now speaking, will be found in union, on this subject, with the basest characters. “Beware of philosophy,” is a precept which as much calls for our attention now as ever.

Yet so fascinating is the power of prejudice and education, that many would look on it as a grievous crime to attempt to tear the laurels of virtue from the brows of Marcus Antoninus. Certainly, however, if his virtue had been genuine; or at all of a piece with that of the scriptures, he could never have treated Christians so cruelly, as we shall see he did.

Is this, then, the man, whom Mr. Pope celebrates in the following lines?

Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
Or failing smiles in exile or in chains,
Like good Aurelius* let him reign, or bleed
Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.

—Providence seems however to have determined, that those who, in contradiction to the feelings of human nature, dark and indignant as it is, and needing a divine illumination, will yet proudly exalt their own ability and sufficiency, shall be frustrated and put to shame. Socrates, with his last breath, gave a sanction to the most absurd idolatry: and Aurelius was guilty of such deeds as human nature shudders to relate.

It is remarkable that Gataker, the editor of Antoninus's Meditations, represents himself, in the most humiliating terms, as quite ashamed to behold the superior virtues of this Prince as described in this book.—To say and to do, are, however, not the same things; nor is there much reason to believe that Marcus performed in practice, what he describes in theory.—But, exclusively of these reflections, suppose we were inclined to draw a comparison between the author and his commentator with respect to humility, such comparison would certainly be much to the disadvantage of the former. I pretend not to have studied the writings of Marcus Aurelius with so much anxious care as to be assured, that there appear in them no traces of this virtue in the emperor; but the GENERAL TURN of the whole book leads me to conclude, that the writer felt no abasing thoughts of himself. I have already defined in what sense I use the term philosopher, as contrasted with the humble follower of Jesus Christ; and in that sense I affirm that

* Antoninus was called also Aurelius.

no philosopher made such a confession of himself as Gaius does.—Such is the natural effect of some knowledge of Christianity on the human mind!

If we attend to the notices of history on the education and manners of Marcus, the account which has been given of his enmity against the gospel will be amply confirmed. Adrian had introduced him among the Salian priests when eight years old, and he became accurately versed in the rituals of his priesthood. At twelve he began to wear the philosopher's cloak: he practised austerities; he lay on the bare ground; and was with difficulty persuaded by his mother to use a mattress and slight coverlet. He placed in his private chapel gold statues of his deceased masters; and visited their sepulchral monuments; and there offered sacrifices, and strewed flowers. So devoted was he to Stoicism, that he attended the schools after he became emperor: and the faith which he put in dreams sufficiently proves his superstitious credulity. From a man so much lifted up by self-sufficiency, bigotry, and superstition, an illiberal censure of the Christians^d is not matter of surprise. "This readiness," says he, "of being resigned to the prospect of death, ought to proceed from a propriety of deliberate judgment, not from mere unintelligent obstinacy, as is the case with the Christians; it should be founded on grounds of solid reason, and be attended with calm composure without any tragical raptures, and in such a way as may induce others to admire and imitate." If this emperor had ever attended to the dying scenes of Christians tortured to death by his orders, with any degree of candour and impartiality, he might have seen all these circumstances exemplified. Thousands of them chose to suffer with deliberate judgment; preferred heavenly things to earthly; counted the cost; and made a reasonable decision; not doubtful, as the emperor was, concerning a future life; but calmly resigning this life in firm expectation of a better, and without any circumstances to justify the suspicion of pride or ostentation; on the contrary, they were adorned with meekness, cheerfulness, and charity.—Hence thousands and ten thousands have been induced to examine what that hidden energy of Christian life must be, which produces such exalted sentiments and such grandeur of spirit; and the power of prejudice was never more strongly exhibited than in this malignant censure of Antoninus; which in truth, is the more inexcusable, because he laboured under no involuntary ignorance of Christians. For, besides the knowledge of them which he must have acquired under his predecessor, he had an opportunity of knowing them from various a-

pologies published in his own reign. Justin's second apology, as we have seen, was published during his reign; one sentence of which demonstrates, in how striking a manner our Saviour's prophecy was then fulfilled, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household!"—Every where, he observes, if a Gentile was reproved by a father or relation, he would revenge himself by informing against the reprover; in consequence of which he was liable to be dragged before the governor, and put to death. Tatian also, Athenagoras, Apollinarius, bishop of Hierapolis, and Theophilus of Antioch, and Melito of Sardis, published apologies. This last published his about the year 177, of which some valuable remains are preserved in Eusebius. A part of his address to Marcus deserves our attention,^e both on account of the justness of the sentiments, and the politeness with which they are delivered. "Pious persons, aggrieved by new edicts published throughout Asia, and never before practised, now suffer persecution. For audacious sycophants, and men who covet other persons' goods, take advantage of these proclamations openly to rob and spoil the innocent by night and by day. If this be done through your order,—let it stand good;—for a just emperor cannot act unjustly; and we will cheerfully submit to the honour of such a death:—This only we humbly crave of your Majesty, that, after an impartial examination of us and of our accusers, you would justly decide whether we deserve death and punishment, or life and protection. But, if these proceedings be not yours, and the new edicts be not the effects of your personal judgment,—edicts which ought not to be enacted even against barbarian enemies—in that case we entreat you not to despise us, who are thus unjustly oppressed." He afterwards reminds him of the justice done to Christians by his two immediate predecessors.

From this account it is evident that Marcus, by new edicts, commenced the persecution, and that it was carried on with merciless barbarity in those Asiatic regions which had been relieved by Pius. There is nothing pleasant that can be suggested to us by this view of the cruel treatment of Christians and of the author of it, except one circumstance—that the effusion of the Spirit of God still continued to produce its holy fruits in those highly-favoured regions.

In the two next chapters I propose to describe distinctly two scenes of this emperor's persecution; and I shall now conclude this general account of him, with briefly mentioning the remarkable story of his danger and relief in the war of the Marcomanni.^f He and his army being hemmed in by the enemy,

^d xi. Sect 3.

^e B. IV. C. 25

^f Euseb. B. v. C. 5.

were ready to perish with thirst; when suddenly a storm of thunder and lightning affrighted the enemies, whilst the rain refreshed the Romans. It is evident that the victory was obtained by a remarkable providential interposition. The Christian soldiers in his army, we are sure, in their distress would pray to their God, even if Eusebius had not told us so. All Christian writers speak of the relief as vouchsafed in answer to their prayers, and no real Christian will doubt of the soundness of their judgment in this point. I have only to add, that Marcus, in a manner agreeable to his usual superstition, ascribed his deliverance to his gods. Each party judged according to their own views; and those moderns who ascribe the whole to the ordinary powers of nature, or to accident, judge also according to THEIR usual profaneness or irreligious turn of thinking. Whether the Divine interposition deserves to be called a miracle or not, is a question rather concerning propriety of language than religion. This seems to me all that is needful to be said on a fact, which on one side has been magnified beyond all bounds; and on the other has been reduced to mere insignificance. It happened in the year 174. The emperor lived five years after this event, and as far as appears, continued a persecutor to the last.

CHAPTER V.

MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP.

THE year 167, the sixth of Marcus, Smyrna was distinguished by the martyrdom of her bishop Polycarp.

We mentioned him before in the account of Ignatius. He had succeeded Bucolus, a vigilant and industrious bishop, in the charge of Smyrna. The Apostles,—and we may suppose St. John particularly,—ordained him to this office. He had been familiarly conversant with the Apostles, and received the government of the Church from those who had been eye-witnesses and ministers of our Lord; and he continually taught that which he had been taught by them.^c Usher^b has laboured to shew^d that he was the ANGEL of the church of Smyrna addressed by our Saviour. If he be right in this, the character of Polycarp is indeed delineated by a hand divine; and the martyrdom before us was particularly predicted. By this account he must have presided 74 years over that Church:—certainly, as we shall hereafter see, his age must have been extremely great: he long survived his friend Ignatius; and was reserved to suffer by Marcus Antoninus.

Some time before that event he came to Rome to hold a conference with Anicetus, the bishop of that See, concerning the time of observing Easter. The matter was soon decided between them, as all matters should be, which enter not into the essence of godliness. They each observed their own customs without any breach of charity between them, real or apparent. But Polycarp found more important employment while at Rome. The heresy of Marcion was strong in that city; and the testimony and zealous labours of one who had known so much of the Apostles were successfully employed against it; and many were reclaimed. It was not in Marcion's power to undermine the authority of this venerable Asiatic. To procure a seeming coalition was the utmost he could expect; and it was as suitable to his views to attempt this, as it was to those of Polycarp to oppose such duplicity and artifice. Meeting him one day in the street, he called out to him, "Polycarp, own us." "I do own thee," says the zealous bishop, "to be the first-born of Satan." I refer the reader to what has been said already of St. John's similar conduct on such occasions; and shall add only that Irenæus, from whom Eusebius relates the story, commends his conduct, and speaks of it as commonly practised by the Apostles and their followers. Irenæus informs us^a that he had a particular delight in recounting what had been told by those who had seen Christ in the flesh; that he used to relate what he had been informed concerning his doctrine and miracles; and when he heard of any heretical attempts to overturn Christian fundamentals, he would cry out, "To what times, O God, hast thou reserved me!" and would leave the place.

Indeed when it is considered what Marcion maintained, and what unquestionable evidence Polycarp had against him in point of matter of fact, we shall see he had just reason to testify his disapprobation. This man was one of the Docetæ: According to him Christ had no real human nature at all: He rejected the whole Old Testament, and mutilated the New. He held two principles, after the manner of the Manichees, in order to account for the origin of evil. If men, who assert things so fundamentally subversive of the gospel, would openly disavow the Christian name, they might be endured with much more composure by Christians; nor would there be any call for so scrupulous an absence from their society;—for St. Paul has so determined the case.¹ But for such men, whether ancient or modern to call themselves Christians, is an intolerable insult on the common sense of mankind.—We know nothing more of the life of this venerable bishop:—Of the circumstances of his

^a Euseb. iv. 14. ^b In his Prolegomen. to Ignatius.
^c Cave's Life of Polycarp.

^a Irenæus's Epistle to Florin.

¹ 1 Cor. v. 10.

death we have an account, and they deserve a very particular relation.

The greatest part of the ancient narrative is preserved by Eusebius.^a The beginning and the end, which he has not given us, have been restored by the care of Archbishop Usher. It is an epistle written in the name of Polycarp's Church of Smyrna: I have ventured to translate the whole myself, yet not without examining what Valesius, the editor of Eusebius, and archbishop Wake, have left us on the subject. It is doubtless one of the most precious ornaments of antiquity; and it seemed to deserve some notes and illustrations.

"The Church of God which sojourns at Smyrna, to that which sojourns at Philomelium," and in all places where the Holy Catholic Church sojourns throughout the world, may the mercy, peace, and love of God the Father, and of the Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied! We have written to you, brethren, as well concerning the other martyrs, as particularly the blessed Polycarp; who, as it were, sealing by his testimony, closed the persecution. For all these things, which were done, were so conducted, that the Lord from above, might exhibit to us the nature of a martyrdom perfectly evangelical. Polycarp did not precipitately give himself up to death, but waited till he was apprehended, as our Lord himself did, that we might imitate him; not caring only for ourselves, but also for our neighbours. It is the office of solid and genuine charity not to desire our own salvation only, but also that of all the brethren.^b Blessed and noble indeed are all martyrdoms which are regulated according to the will of God: for it behoves us, who assume to ourselves the character of Christians,—a name professing distinguished sanctity,—to submit to God alone the arbitration of all wants.^c Doubtless their magnanimity, their patience, their love of the Lord, deserve the admiration of every one; who though torn with whips till the frame and structure of their bodies were laid open even to their veins and arteries, yet meekly endured; so that those who stood around pitied them and lamented. But such was their fortitude, that no one of them uttered a sigh

or groan: Thus they advised to us all that, at that hour, the martyrs of Christ, though tormented, were absent, as it were, from the body; or rather that the Lord being present, conversed familiarly with them: thus they were supported by the grace of Christ; thus they despised the torments of this world, and by one hour redeemed themselves from eternal punishment. The fire of savage tormentors was cold to them: for they had steadily in view a desire to avoid that fire which is eternal and never to be quenched. And with the eyes of their heart they had respect to the good things reserved for those who endure,—THINGS—WHICH EYE HATH NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HATH IT ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN TO CONCEIVE. But these good things were then exhibited to them by the Lord: They were indeed then no longer men, but angels. In like manner those, who were condemned to the wild beasts, underwent for a time cruel torments, being placed under shells of sea fish, and exposed to various other tortures, that, if possible, the infernal tyrant, by an uninterrupted series of suffering, might tempt them to deny their Master. Much did Satan contrive against them:^d but, thanks to God, without effect against them all. The magnanimous Germanicus, by his patience and courage, strengthened the weak: He fought with wild beasts in an illustrious manner; for when the Proconsul besought him to pity his own old age, he irritated the wild beasts by provocation, and was desirous of departing more quickly from a world of wickedness. —And now the whole multitude, astonished at the fortitude of Christians, that is, of the true friends and worshippers of God, cried out, "Take away the atheists," let Polycarp be sought for." One Christian, by name Quintus, lately come from Phrygia, his native country, on sight of the beasts, trembled. He had persuaded some persons to present themselves before the tribunal of their own accord. Him the Proconsul, by soothing speeches, induced to swear and to sacrifice. On this account, brethren, we do not approve of those who offer themselves to martyrdom;—"for we have not so learned Christ."

The admirable Polycarp, when he heard what passed, was quite unmoved, and resolved to remain in the city. But, induced by the intreaties of his people, he retired to a village at no great distance; and there, with a few friends, he spent his time entirely, day and night, in praying, according to his usual custom, for all the churches in the world.—Three days before he was seized, he had a

^a B. iv. Euseb. Hist. Ch. 15.

^b A city of Lycania. I thought it right to give the English reader the precise term—of sojourning—used in the original. It was the usual language and the spirit too of the Church at that time.

^c I translate according to the Greek. But though common candour may put a favourable construction on the expressions, the honour then put on martyrdom seems excessive.

^d They doubtless mean to censure the self-will of those who threw themselves on their persecutors before they were providentially called to suffer. The calm patience of Polycarp, in this respect, much excelled the impetuosity of Ignatius. But Polycarp now was much older than he was when Ignatius suffered, and very probably had grown in grace. The Asiatic churches seem to have corrected the errors of excessive zeal, which even in the best Christians had formerly prevailed. The case of Quintus will soon throw light on this subject.

^e The language of these ancient Christians deserves to be noticed; they have their eye more steadily on a divine influence on the one hand, and on a diabolical one on the other, than is fashionable in our times.

^f The term of reproach then commonly affixed to Christians.

vision while he was praying: He saw his pillow consumed by fire: and, turning to the company, he said prophetically, "I must be burnt alive."—Upon hearing that the persons, in search of him, were just at hand, he retired to another village: Immediately the officers came to his house; and not finding him, they seized two servants, one of whom was induced, by torture, to confess the place of his retreat. Certainly it was impossible to conceal him, since even those of his own household discovered him. And the Tetrarch, called Cleronomus Herod, hastened to introduce him into the Stadium; that so he might obtain his lot as a follower of Christ; and that those, who betrayed him, might share with Judas. Taking then the servant as their guide, they went out about suppertime, with their usual arms, as against a robber; and arriving late, they found him lying in an upper room at the end of the house, whence he might have made his escape,* but he would not, saying,—“The will of the Lord be done.” Hearing that they were arrived, he came down and conversed with them; and all, who were present, admired his age and constancy: Some said, “Is it worth while to take pains to apprehend so aged a person?” He immediately ordered meat and drink to be set before them, as much as they pleased, and begged them to allow him one hour to pray without molestation; which being granted, he prayed standing; and was so full of the grace of God, that he could not cease from speaking for two hours: The hearers were astonished; and many of them repented that they were come to seize so divine a character.

When he had finished his prayers, having made mention of all whom he had ever known, small and great, noble and vulgar, and of the whole Catholic church throughout the world, the hour of departing being come, they set him on an ass and led him to the city.† The Treacher Herod, and his father Nicetes, met him, who taking him up into their chariot, began to advise him, asking, “What harm is it to say, Lord Cæsar!—and to sacrifice, and be safe?” At first he was silent, but being pressed, he said, “I will not follow your advice.” When they could not persuade him, they treated him abusively, and thrust him out of the chariot, so that in falling he bruised his thigh. But he, still unmoved as if he had suffered nothing, went on cheerfully under the conduct of his guards to the Stadium. There the tumult being so great that few could hear any thing, a voice from heaven said to Polycarp, as he entered on the Stadium, “Be strong, Polycarp,

and behave yourself like a man.”—None saw the speaker, but many of us heard the voice.—

When he was brought to the tribunal, there was a great tumult, as soon as it was generally understood that Polycarp was apprehended. The proconsul asked him, if he was Polycarp, to which he assented. The former then began to exhort him,—“Have pity on thy own great age—and the like. Swear by the fortune of Cæsar—repent—say—Take away the atheists.” Polycarp, with a grave aspect, beholding all the multitude, waving his hand to them, and looking up to heaven, said, “Take away the atheists.” The proconsul urging him, and saying; “Swear, and I will release thee,—reproach Christ.” Polycarp said, “Eighty and six years have I served him, and he hath never wronged me, and how can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me?” The proconsul still urging, “Swear by the fortune of Cæsar.” Polycarp said, “If you still vainly contend to make me swear by the fortune of Cæsar, as you speak, affecting an ignorance of my real character, hear me frankly declaring what I am. I am a Christian; and if you desire to learn the Christian doctrine, assign me a day, and hear.” The proconsul said, “Persuade the people.” Polycarp said, “I have thought proper to address you; for we are taught to pay all honour to magistracies and powers appointed by God; which is consistent with a good conscience. But I do not hold them worthy that I should apologize before them.” “I have wild beasts,” says the proconsul: “I will expose you to them, unless you repent.” “Call them,” replies the martyr. “Our minds are not to be changed from the better to the worse: but it is a good thing to be changed from evil to good.” “I will tame your spirit by fire;” says the other, “since you despise the wild beasts, unless you repent.” “You threaten me with fire,” answers Polycarp, “which burns for a moment, and will be soon extinct; but you are ignorant of the future judgment, and of the fire of eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly. But why do you delay? Do what you please.” Saying this and more, he was filled with confidence and joy, and grace shone in his countenance; so that he was so far from being confounded by the menaces: On the contrary the proconsul was visibly embarrassed: he sent, however, the herald to proclaim thrice, in the midst of the assembly, “Polycarp hath professed himself a Christian.” Upon this all the multitude, both of Gentiles and of Jews, who dwelt at Smyrna, with insatiate rage shouted aloud, “This is the doctor of Asia, the father of Christians,

* Those who know the eastern custom of flat-roofed houses, will not be surprised at this.

† I have not thought it worth while to translate what relates to the time when Polycarp suffered, on which point the learned disagree in the mode of interpretation.

* The reader should remember that miraculous in-

terpositions of various kinds were still frequent in the church.

* I cannot think that this was said in contempt of the vulgar, but on account of the prejudice and enmity which their conduct exhibited at that time.

the subverter of our gods, who hath taught many not to sacrifice nor to adore." They now begged Philip, the Asiarch, to let out a lion against Polycarp. But he refused, observing, that the amphitheatrical spectacles of the wild beasts were finished. They then unanimously shouted, that he should be burnt alive;—for his vision was of necessity to be accomplished.—Whilst he was praying, he observed the fire kindling, and turning to the faithful that were with him, he said prophetically,—“I must be burnt alive.” The business was executed with all possible speed; for the people immediately gathered fuel from the work-shops and baths, in which employment the Jews^{*} distinguished themselves with their usual malice. As soon as the fire was prepared, stripping off his clothes, and loosing his girdle, he attempted to take off his shoes,—a thing unusual for him to do formerly,—because each of the faithful were wont to strive who should be most assiduous in serving him. For, before his martyrdom, his integrity and blameless conduct had always procured him the most unfeigned respect. Immediately the usual appendages of burning were placed about him. And when they were going to fasten him to the stake, he said, “Let me remain as I am; for he who giveth me strength to sustain the fire, will enable me also, without your securing me with nails, to remain unmoved in the fire.” Upon which they bound him without nailing him. And he, putting his hands behind him, and being bound as a distinguished ram selected from a great flock, a burnt-offering acceptable to God Almighty, said, “O Father of thy beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have attained the knowledge of thee, O God of angels and principalities, and of all creation, and of all the just who live in thy sight, I bless thee, that thou hast counted me worthy of this day, and this hour, to receive my portion in the number of martyrs, in the cup of Christ, for the resurrection to eternal life both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost; among whom may I be received before thee this day as a sacrifice well-favoured and acceptable, which thou, the faithful and true God, hast prepared, promised before-hand, and fulfilled accordingly. Wherefore I praise thee for all those things, I bless thee, I glorify thee, by the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son: through whom, with him in the Holy Spirit, be glory to thee, both now and for ever. AMEN.”

And when he had pronounced Amen aloud, and finished prayer, the officers lighted

the fire, and a great flame burning out.—We, to whom it was given to see, and who also were reserved to relate to others that which happened,—saw a wonder.—For the flame, forming the appearance of an arch, as the sail of a vessel filled with wind, was as a wall round about the body of the martyr; which was in the midst, not as burning flesh, but as gold and silver refined in a furnace. We received also in our nostrils such a fragrance, as arises from frankincense, or some other precious perfume. At length the impious, observing that his body could not be consumed by the fire, ordered the confector² to approach, and to plunge his sword into his body. Upon this a quantity of blood gushed out, so that the fire was extinguished, and all the multitude were astonished to see the difference thus providentially made between the unbelievers and the elect; of whom the admirable personage before us was, doubtless, one, in our age an Apostolical and prophetic teacher, the bishop of the Catholic church of Smyrna. For, whatever he declared, was fulfilled and will be fulfilled. But the envious, malignant, and spiteful enemy of the just, observed the honour put on his martyrdom, and his blameless life; and knowing that he was now crowned with immortality and the prize of unquestionable victory, studied to prevent us from obtaining his body, though many of us longed to have communion³ with his sacred flesh. For some persons suggested to Nicetas, the father of Herod, and the brother of Alce,⁴ to go to the proconsul, and intreat him not to deliver the body to the Christians, lest, said they, “leaving the Crucified One, they should begin to worship him.” And they said these things upon the suggestions and arguments of the Jews, who also watched us, when we were going to take his body from the pile; unacquainted indeed with our views, namely, that it is not possible for us to forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all who are saved of the human race, nor ever to worship any other.⁵ For we adore him as being the Son of God; but we justly love the martyrs as disciples of the Lord, and followers of him, on account of that distinguished affection which they bore towards their King and their Teacher;—and may we be ranked at last in their number! The centurion, perceiving the malevolence of the Jews, placed the body in the

² An officer, whose business it was in the Roman games to dispatch any beast that was unruly or dangerous.

³ I see no ground for the well-known Papistical inference hence usually drawn respecting the virtues ascribed to relics. To express an affectionate regard to the deceased by a decent attention to the funeral rites, is all that is necessarily meant by the expression.

⁴ Alce is spoken of with honour in Ignatius's Epistle to the Smyrnaeans. She, it seems, had found, in her nearest relations, inveterate foes to whatever she held dear.

⁵ The faith of Christ, and a just honour paid to true Christians, abstracted from superstition and idolatry, appear in this passage.

^{*} I scarce know a more striking view of the judicial curse inflicted on the Jews than this. Indeed this people all along exerted themselves in persecution; and Justin Martyr tells us of a charge which had been sent from Jerusalem by the chief priests against Christians directed to their brethren through the world.

midst of the fire, and burnt it. Then we gathered up his bones,—more precious than gold and jewels,—and deposited them in a proper place; where, if it be possible, we shall meet, and the Lord will grant us, in gladness and joy, to celebrate the birth-day of his martyrdom, both in commemoration of those who have wrestled before us, and for the instruction and confirmation of those who come after.^b Thus far concerning the blessed Polycarp.—Eleven brethren from Philadelphia suffered with him,—but he alone is particularly celebrated by all,—even by Gentiles he is spoken of in every place. He was in truth, not only an illustrious teacher, but also an eminent martyr, whose martyrdom all desire to imitate, because it was regulated exactly by evangelical principles. For by patience he conquered the unjust magistrate; and thus receiving the crown of immortality, and exulting with Apostles and all the righteous, he glorifies God, even the Father, and blesses our Lord, even the Ruler of our bodies, and the Shepherd of his Church dispersed through the world.—You desired a full account; and we, for the present, have sent you, what will, perhaps, be thought a compendious one, by our brother Mark. When you have read it, send it to the brethren beyond you, that they also may glorify the Lord, who makes selections from his own servants of holy men, who shall thus honour him by their deaths. To him who is able to conduct us all by his grace and free mercy into his heavenly kingdom, by his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, to him be glory, honour, power, majesty, for ever. AMEN. Salute all the Saints; those with us salute you, particularly Evaristus the writer, with all his house. He suffered martyrdom on the second day of the month Xanthicus, on the seventh day before the Calends of March, on the great Sabbath, at the eighth hour. He was apprehended by Herod, under Philip the Trallian Pontifex, Statius Quadratus being proconsul, but Jesus Christ reigning for ever, to whom be glory, honour, majesty, an eternal throne from age to age! We pray that you may be strong, brethren, walking in the word Jesus Christ, according to the gospel, with whom be glory to God, even the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of his elected Saints, among whom the blessed Polycarp hath suffered martyrdom, with whom may we be found in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, having followed his steps!

These things Caius hath transcribed from the copy of Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who also lived with Irenæus. And I Socrates of Corinth have transcribed from the copy of Caius. Grace be with you all. And I

^b If we were in our times subject to such sufferings, I suspect these anniversary-martyrdoms of antiquity might be thought useful to us also. The superstition of other times appears not, I think, in this epistle.

Pionius have transcribed from the fore-mentioned, having made search for it, and received the knowledge of it by a vision of Polycarp, as I shall shew in what follows, collecting it when now almost obsolete. So may the Lord Jesus Christ collect men with his elect, to whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit to the ages of ages. AMEN.^c

I thought it not amiss for the English reader to see the manner in which books were then successively preserved in the church. Of Irenæus we shall hear more hereafter. Nor ought Pionius's account of his vision to be hastily alighted, by those who consider the scarcity of useful writings in those days. Whether the case was worthy of such a divine interposition, we, who indolently enjoy books without end, can scarce be judges. However, if any choose to add this to the number of pious frauds, which certainly did once much abound, the authenticity of the account will still, in substance, remain unimpeached, as very near the whole of it is in Eusebius. This historian mentions Metrodorus, a Presbyter of the sect of Marcion, who perished in the flames among others who suffered at Smyrae. It cannot be denied that heretics also have had their martyrs. Pride and obstinacy will in some minds persist even to death. But as all, who have been classed among heretics, have not been so in reality, Metrodorus might be a very different sort of a man from Marcion.

A comparative view of a sound Christian Hero suffering as we have seen Polycarp did, with a Roman Stoic or untutored Indian undergoing afflictions, where we could have an opportunity of surveying all circumstances, might shew, in a practical light, the peculiar genius and spirit of Christianity, and its divine superiority. At the same time, those who content themselves with a cold, speculative, and as they term it, rational religion, may ask themselves how it would have suited their principles to endure what Polycarp did;—and whether something of what is falsely called enthusiasm, and which the foregoing epistle breathes so abundantly, be not really divine and truly rational in the best sense.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MARTYRS OF LYONS AND VIENNE.

‘THE flame of the persecution by Antoninus reached a country, which hitherto has afforded us no ecclesiastical materials; I mean that of France, in those times called Gallia. Two neighbouring cities, Vienna and Lyons, appear to have been much fa-

voured with evangelical light and love. Vienne was an ancient Roman colony; Lyons was more modern, and her present bishop was Pothinus. His very name points him out to be a Grecian. Irenæus was a Presbyter of Lyons, and seems to have been the author of the epistle which Eusebius has preserved, and which the reader shall see presently. Other names concerned in these events are evidently of Greek extraction, and it is hence most probable that some Asiatic Greeks had been the founders of these Churches. Whoever casts his eye on the map of France, and sees the situation of Lyons, at present the largest and most populous city in that kingdom, next to Paris, may observe how favourable the confluence of the Rhine and the Soane—anciently called the Arar—on which it stands, is for the purposes of commerce.^d The navigation of the Mediterranean, in all probability, was conducted by merchants of Lyons and of Smyrna; and, hence, the easy introduction of the gospel from the latter place and from the other Asiatic churches is apparent. How much God hath blessed the work in France, the accounts of their sufferings will evince. Lyons and Vienne appear to be daughters, of whom their Asiatic mothers needed not to be ashamed.

THE EPISTLE OF THE CHURCHES OF VIENNE
AND LYONS TO THE BRETHREN IN ASIA AND
PHRYGIA.*

The servants of Christ, sojourning in Vienne and Lyons in France, to the brethren in Asia propria and Phrygia, who have the same faith and hope of redemption with us, peace, and grace, and glory from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

We are not competent to describe with accuracy, nor is it in our power to express the greatness of the affliction sustained here by the saints, the intense animosity of the heathen against them, and the complicated sufferings of the blessed martyrs. The grand enemy assaulted us with all his might; and by his first essays, exhibited intentions of exercising malice without limits and without control. He left no method untried to habituate his slaves to his bloody work, and to prepare them by previous exercises against the servants of God. Christians were absolutely prohibited from appearing, in any houses except their own, in baths, in the market, or in any public place whatever. The grace of God, however, fought for us, preserving the weak and exposing the strong; who, like

pillars, were able to withstand him in patience, and to draw the whole fury of the wicked against themselves. These entered into the contest, and sustained every species of pain and reproach. What was heavy to others, to them was light, while they were hastening to Christ, evincing indeed, that THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY THAT SHALL BE REVEALED IN US. The first trial was from the people at large; shouts, blows, the dragging of their bodies, the plundering of their goods, casting of stones, and the confining of them within their own houses, and all the indignities which may be expected from a fierce and outrageous multitude, these were magnanimously sustained. And now, being led into the Forum by the tribune and the magistrates, they were examined before all the people, whether they were Christians; and, on pleading guilty, were shut up in prison till the arrival of the governor.^e Before him they were at length brought; and he treated us with great savageness of manners. The spirit of Vettius Epagathus, one of the brethren, was roused, a man full of charity both to God and man, whose conduct was so exemplary, though but a youth, that he might justly be compared to old Zacharias: for he walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, a man ever unwearied in acts of beneficence to his neighbours, full of zeal towards God, and fervent in spirit. He could not bear to see so manifest a perversion of justice; but, being moved with indignation, he demanded to be heard in behalf of the brethren, and pledged himself to prove that there was nothing atheistic or impious among them. Those about the tribunal shouted against him: He was a man of quality: and the governor, being vexed and irritated by so equitable a demand from such a person, only asked him if he were a Christian; and this he confessed in the most open manner:—the consequence was, that he was ranked among the martyrs. He was called, indeed, the Advocate of the Christians; but he had an Advocate within, the Holy Spirit more abundantly than Zacharias, which he demonstrated by the fulness of his charity, cheerfully laying down his life in defence of his brethren; for he was, and is still, a genuine disciple of Christ, following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.^f The rest began

^e It is probable, but not quite certain, that this governor was Severus, afterwards emperor. The conduct of this governor was worthy of so inhuman a prince.

^f It is not easy to translate this, because of the ambiguous use of the term Πάρεστης, which signifies both a comforter and an advocate. Besides their only advocate in heaven, Jesus Christ, Christians have the comfort and power of his Spirit within.

^g Every man who reads this must see the iniquity and absurdity of the governor! A term of reproach stands in the room of argument. The term Christian has long ceased to be infamous. But the words, Lord, Puritan, Pietist, and Methodist, have supplied its place.

^d When will the moderns, notwithstanding all their enlightened views and improvements, learn to connect navigation and commerce with the propagation of the gospel?

^e Eusebius does not give the whole of the epistle at length, but omits some parts, and interrupts the thread of the narrative. It is not necessary to notice the particular instances.

now to be distinguished. The capital martyrs appeared indeed ready for the contest, and discharged their part with all alacrity of mind. Others seemed not so ready; but rather, unexercised, and as yet weak, and unable to sustain the shock of such a contest: Of these ten in number lapsed, whose case filled us with great and unmeasurable sorrow, and dejected the spirits of those who had not yet been apprehended, who, though they sustained all indignities, yet deserted not the martyrs in their distress. Then we were all much alarmed, because of the uncertain event of confession, not that we dreaded the torments with which we were threatened, but because we looked forward unto the end, and feared the danger of apostasy. Persons were now apprehended daily of such as were counted worthy to fill up the number of the lapsed, so that the most excellent were selected from the two churches, even those by whose labour they had been founded and established.¹ There were seized at the same time some of our heathen servants,—for the governor had openly ordered us all to be sought for,—who, by the impulse of Satan, fearing the torments which they saw inflicted on the Saints, at the suggestion of the soldiers, accused us of eating human flesh, and of various unnatural crimes, and of things not fit even to be mentioned or imagined, and such as ought not to be believed of mankind.² These things being divulged, all were incensed even to madness against us; so that if some were formerly more moderate on account of any connections of blood, affinity, or friendship, they were then transported beyond all bounds with indignation. Now it was that our Lord's word was fulfilled, "The time will come when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." The holy martyrs³ now sustained tortures which exceed the powers of description: Satan labouring, by means of these tortures, to extort something slanderous against Christianity. The whole fury of the multitude, the governor, and the soldiers, was spent in a particular manner on Sanctus of Vienne, the deacon, and on Marcellus, a late convert indeed, but a magnanimous wrestler in spiritual things, and on Attalus of Pergamus, a man who had ever been the pillar and support of our church,⁴ and, lastly, on Blandina, through whom Christ shewed, that those things, that appear

unsightly and contemptible among men, are most honourable in the presence of God, on account of love to his name, exhibited in real energy, and not in boasting and pompous pretences. For while we all feared; and among the rest while her mistress, according to the flesh, who herself was one of the noble army of martyrs, dreaded that she would not be able to witness a good confession, because of the weakness of her body, Blandina was endued with so much fortitude, that those, who successively tortured her from morning to night, were quite worn out with fatigue, and owned themselves conquered and exhausted of their whole apparatus of tortures, and were amazed to see her still breathing whilst her body was torn and laid open: they confessed that any single species of the torture would have been sufficient to dispatch her, much more so great a variety as had been applied. But the blessed woman, as a generous wrestler, recovered fresh vigour in the act of confession; and it was an evident refreshment, support, and an annihilation of all her pains to say, "I am a Christian, and no evil is committed among us."

In the mean time Sanctus, having sustained in a manner more than human the most barbarous indignities, while the impious hoped to extort from him something injurious to the gospel, through the duration and intenseness of his sufferings, resisted with so much firmness, that he would neither tell his own name, nor that of his nation or state, nor whether he was a freeman or slave; but to every interrogatory he answered in Latin, "I am a Christian." This, he repeatedly owned, was to him both name, and state, and race, and every thing; and nothing else could the heathen draw from him. Hence the indignation of the governor and of the torturers was fiercely levelled against this holy person, so that having exhausted all the usual methods of torture, they at last fixed brazen plates to the most tender parts of his body. These were made red hot for the purpose of scorching him, and yet he remained upright and inflexible, and firm in his confession; being, no doubt, bedewed and refreshed by the heavenly fountain of the water of life which flows from the belly of Christ.⁵ His body witnessed indeed the ghastly tortures which he had sustained, being one continued wound and bruise, altogether contracted, and no longer retaining the form of a human creature: In this man the view of Christ suffering wrought great marvels, confounded the adversary, and shewed, for the encouragement of the rest, that nothing is to be feared

¹ Hence I judge that their churches were of no great antiquity.

² Hence we see again the usual charge of unnatural crimes objected to the Christians, believed in the persecution of the resurrection, but afterwards generally discredited by sober persons.

³ Surely they needed much the aid of the Heavenly Comforter, promised in these discourses, to enable them to sustain the load of calumny so injurious and distressing.

⁴ A further confirmation of the idea that the gospel had been brought into France by the charitable zeal of the Asiatic Christians.

⁵ An illustrious testimony to the doctrine of the Spirit's influences, now so much depreciated, but which was then the support of suffering Christians. The allusion is to John, 7th chapter, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. And this speaks he of the Spirit."

where the love of the Father is; and that nothing is painful where the glory of Christ is exhibited. For while the impious imagined, when after some days they renewed his tortures, that a fresh application of the same methods of punishment to his wounds, now swollen and inflamed, must either overcome his constancy, or, by dispatching him on the spot, strike a terror into the rest, as he could not even bear to be touched by the hand, this was so far from being the case, that, contrary to all expectation, his body recovered its natural position in the second course of torture; he was restored to his former shape and to the use of his limbs; so that, by the grace of Christ, this cruelty proved not a punishment but a cure.

One of those who had denied Christ was Biblia, a female. The devil imagining that he had now devoured her, and desirous to augment her condemnation, by inducing her to accuse the Christians falsely, led her to the torture, compelling her to charge us with horrid impieties, as being a weak and timorous creature. But in her torture she recovered herself, and awoke as out of a deep sleep, being admonished, by a temporary punishment, of the danger of eternal fire in hell; and, in opposition to the impious, she said, "How can we eat infants,—we, to whom it is not lawful to eat the blood of beasts." And now she professed herself a Christian, and was added to the army of martyrs. The power of Christ, exerted in the patience of his people, had now exhausted the usual artifices of torment; and the devil was driven to new resources. Christians were thrust into the darkest and most noisome parts of the prison: their feet were distended in a wooden trunk even to the fifth hole; and in this situation they suffered all the indignities which diabolical malice could inflict. Hence many of them were suffocated in prison, whom the Lord, shewing forth his own glory, was pleased thus to take to himself. The rest, though afflicted to such a degree as to seem scarce capable of recovery under the kindest treatment, destitute as they were of all help and support, yet remained alive, strengthened by the Lord, and confirmed both in body and mind; and these encouraged and comforted the rest.

Some young persons who had been lately seized, and whose bodies had been unexercised with sufferings, unequal to the severity of the confinement, expired. The blessed Pothinus, bishop of Lyons, upwards of ninety years of age, and very infirm and asthmatic, yet strong in spirit, and panting after martyrdom, was dragged before the tribunal; his body worn out indeed with age and dis-

ease, yet he retained a soul through which Christ might triumph. Born by the soldiers to the tribunal, and attended by the magistrates and all the multitude, shouting against him as if he were Christ himself, he made a good confession. Being asked by the governor, who was the God of the Christians, he answered, if ye be worthy, ye shall know. He was then unmercifully dragged about, and suffered variety of ill treatment: those, who were near, insulted him with their hands and feet, without the least respect to his age; and these at a distance threw at him whatever came to hand: every one looked upon himself as deficient in zeal, if he did not insult him in some way or other. For thus they imagined they revenged the cause of their gods: He was thrown into prison almost breathless; and after two days he expired.

And here appeared a remarkable dispensation of Providence, and the immense compassion of Jesus, rarely exhibited indeed among the brethren, but not foreign to the character of Christ. Many, who, when first apprehended, had denied their Saviour, were notwithstanding shut up in prison and suffered dreadful severities, as this denial of Christ had availed them not. But those, who confessed what they were, were imprisoned as Christians, abstracted from any other charge. Now the former, as murderers and incestuous wretches, were punished much more than the rest: Besides the joy of martyrdom supported the latter, and the hope of the promises, and the love of Christ, and the Spirit of the Father. The former were oppressed with the pangs of guilt; so that, while they were dragged along, their very countenances distinguished them from the rest: But the faithful proceeded with cheerful steps: Their countenances shone with much grace and glory: Their bonds were as the most beautiful ornaments, and they themselves looked as brides adorned with their richest array, breathing the fragrance of Christ so much, that some thought they had been literally perfumed. The others went on dejected, spiritless, and forlorn, and in every way disgraced, even insulted by the heathen as cowards and poltroons, and treated as murderers: they had lost the precious, the glorious, the soul-reviving appellation. The rest, observing these things, were confirmed in the faith, confessed without hesitation on their being apprehended, nor admitted the diabolical suggestion for a moment.

The martyrs were put to death in various ways: Or, in other words, they wove a chaplet of various odours and flowers, and presented it to the Father. In truth, it became the wisdom and goodness of God to appoint that his servants, after enduring a great and variegated contest, should, as victors, receive the great crown of immortality.—Maturus,

* Hence it appears that the eating of blood was not practised among the Christians of Lyons; and, that they understood not Christian liberty in this point, will not be wondered at by those who consider the circumstances of the first Christians.

Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus, were led to the wild beasts into the amphitheatre, to the common spectacle of Gentile inhumanity.

One day extraordinary of the shews being afforded to the people on our account, Martius and Sanctus again underwent various tortures in the amphitheatre, as if they had suffered nothing before. Thus were they treated like those wrestlers who, having conquered several times already, were obliged afresh to contend with other conquerors by fresh lots, till some one was conqueror of the whole number and as such was crowned. Here they sustained again, as they were led to the amphitheatre, the blows usually inflicted on those who were condemned to wild beasts; they were exposed to be dragged and torn by the beasts, and to all the barbarities which the mad populace with shouts exacted, and above all to the hot iron chair, in which their bodies were roasted, and emitted a disgusting smell. Nor was this all; the persecutors raged still more, if possible, to overcome their patience. But not a word could be extorted from Sanctus, besides what he first had uttered—the word of confession. These then after remaining alive a long time, expired at length, and became a spectacle to the world, equivalent to all the variety usual in the fights of gladiators.

Blandina, suspended to a stake, was exposed as food to the wild beasts; she was seen suspended in the form of a cross, and employed in vehement supplication. The sight inspired the combatants with much alacrity, while they beheld with their bodily eyes, in the person of their sister, the figure of him who was crucified for them, that he might persuade those who believe in him, that every one, who suffers for the glory of Christ, always has communion with the living God. None of the beasts at that time touched her: she was taken down from the stake, thrown again into prison, and reserved for a future contest; that having overcome in various exercises, she might fully condemn the old serpent, and fire the brethren with a noble spirit of Christian emulation. Weak and contemptible as she might be deemed, yet when clothed with Christ the mighty and invincible champion, she became victorious over the enemy in a variety of encounters, and was crowned with immortality.

Attalus also was vehemently demanded by the multitude; for he was a person of great reputation among us. He advanced in all the cheerfulness and serenity of a good conscience;—an experienced Christian, and ever ready and active in bearing testimony to the truth. He was led round the amphi-

theatre, and a tablet was carried before him, inscribed in Latin, "This is Attalus the Christian." The rage of the people would have had him dispatched immediately; but the governor understanding that he was a Roman, ordered him back to prison: and concerning him and others, who could plead the same privilege of Roman citizenship, he wrote to the emperor, and waited for his instructions.

The interval which this circumstance occasioned was not unfruitful to the Church.—The unbounded compassion of Christ appeared in the patience of many: 'Dead members were restored to life by the means of the living; and the martyrs became singularly serviceable to the lapsed; and thus the Church rejoiced to receive her sons returning to her bosom: for by these means most of those who had denied Christ were recovered, and dared to profess their Saviour: they felt again the divine life in their souls: they approached to the tribunal; and their God, who willett not the death of a sinner, being again precious to their souls, they desired a fresh opportunity of being interrogated by the governor.

Cæsar sent orders that the confessors of Christ should be put to death; and that the apostates from their divine master should be dismissed.—It was now the general assembly, held annually at Lyons, and frequented from all parts; and this was the time when the Christian prisoners were again exposed to the populace. The governor again interrogated: Roman citizens had the privilege of dying by decollation; the rest were exposed to wild beasts; and now it was that our Redeemer was magnified in those who had apostatized. They were interrogated separately from the rest, as persons soon to be dismissed, and made a confession to the SUPREMACY OF THE GENTILES, and were added to the list of martyrs. A small number still remained in apostacy; but they were those who possessed not the least spark of divine faith, had not the least acquaintance with the riches of Christ in their souls, and had no fear of God before their eyes; whose life had brought reproach on Christianity, and had evidenced them to be the children of perdition; but all the rest were added to the Church.

During their examination, a man who had lived many years in France, and was gener-

* Dead in their spiritual afflictions.

* It must be confessed that the power of Stoicism in hardening the heart was never more strongly illustrated than in the case of Marcus Antoninus, thus breaking all the rights of Roman citizenship, and all the feelings of humanity. It puts me in mind of Mr. Pope's lines,

In last apathy let Stoics boast
Their virtue fix'd—'tis fix'd as in a frost.

* The difference between true and merely professing Christians is well stated, and deserves to be noticed. A season of persecution separates real believers and real experienced Christians from others, much more visibly than ministers can now do by the most judicious distinctions.

* The allusions to the savage shews, so frequently made in this narrative, point out their frequency in these despotic times; and give us occasion to reflect on the real appearance which society has assumed, since even the form of Christianity has prevailed in the world.

ally known for his love of God and zealous regard for divine truth, a person of Apostolical endowments, a physician by profession, a Phrygian by nation, and named Alexander, stood near the tribunal, and by his gestures encouraged them to profess the faith. He appeared to all who surrounded the tribunal as one who travailed in much pain on their account. And now the multitude, incensed at the Christian integrity exhibited at the conclusion by the lapsed, made a clamour against Alexander as the cause of this change. Upon which the governor ordered him into his presence, and asked him who he was : He declared that he was a Christian : The former, in great wrath condemned him instantly to the wild beasts ;—and the next day he was introduced with Attalus. For the governor, willing to gratify the people, delivered Attalus again to the wild beasts ; and these two underwent all the usual methods of torture in the amphitheatre : indeed they sustained a very grievous conflict, and at length expired. Alexander neither groaned nor spake a word, but in his heart conversed with God. Attalus, sitting on the iron chair and being scorched ; when the smell issued from him, said to the multitude in Latin, “ This indeed which ye do is to devour men ; but we devour not our fellow-creatures, nor practise any other wickedness.” Being asked what is the name of God, he answered, “ God has not a name as men have.”

On the last day of the spectacles, Blandina was again introduced with Ponticus, a youth of fifteen : they had been daily brought in to see the punishment of the rest. They were ordered to swear by the idols ; and the mob perceiving them to persevere immovably, and to treat their menaces with superior contempt, were incensed ; and no pity was shewn either to the sex of the one, or to the tender age of the other. Their tortures were now aggravated by all sorts of methods ; and the whole round of barbarities was inflicted ; but menaces and punishments were equally ineffectual. Ponticus, animated by his sister, who was observed by the heathen to strengthen and confirm him, after a magnanimous exertion of patience, yielded up the ghost.

And now the blessed Blandina, last of all, as a generous mother having exhorted her children, and sent them before her victorious to the KING, reviewing the whole series of their sufferings, hastened to undergo the same herself, rejoicing and triumphing in her exit, as if invited to a marriage-supper, not going to be exposed to wild beasts. After she had endured stripes, the tearing of the beasts, and the iron chair, she was inclosed in a net, and thrown to a bull ; and having been tossed some time by the animal, and proving quite superior to her pains, through the in-

fluence of hope, and the realizing view of the objects of her faith and her fellowship with Christ, she at length breathed out her soul. Even her enemies confessed that no woman among them had ever suffered such and so great things. But their madness against the saints was not yet satiated. For the fierce and savage tribes of men, being instigated by the ferocious enemy of mankind, were not easily softened ; and they now began another peculiar war against the bodies of the Saints. That they had been conquered by their patience, produced no stings of remorse : Indeed the feelings of common sense and humanity appear to have been extinguished among them : Disappointment increased their fury : The devil, the governor, and the mob equally shewed their malice ; that the scripture might be fulfilled, “ He that is unjust, let him be unjust still,” as well as, “ he that is holy, let him be holy still.” They now exposed to dogs the bodies of those who had been suffocated in prison, and carefully watched night and day, lest any of our people should by stealth perform the funeral rites. And then exposing what had been left by the wild beasts or by the fire, relics partly torn, and partly scorched, and the heads with the trunks, they preserved them by military guards unburies for several days. Some gnashed on them with their teeth, desirous, if possible, to make them feel still more of their malice. Others laughed and insulted them, praising their own gods, and ascribing the vengeance inflicted on the martyrs to them. All, however, were not of this ferocious mould. Yet even those who were of a gentler spirit, and who sympathized with us in some degree, upbraided us, often saying,—“ Where is their God,—and what profit do they derive from their religion, which they valued above life itself ?”

As for ourselves, our sorrow was greatly increased because we were deprived of the melancholy satisfaction of interring our friends. Neither the darkness of the night could befriend us, nor could we prevail by prayers or by price. They watched the bodies with unremitting vigilance, as if to deprive them of sepulchre was to them an object of great importance. The bodies of the martyrs, having been confumeliously treated and exposed for six days, were burnt and reduced to ashes, and scattered by the wicked into the Rhone, that not the least particle of them might appear on the earth any more. And they did these things as if they could prevail against God, and prevent their resurrection ;—and that they might deter others, as they said, from the hope of a

* Rev. xlii. 11. A striking proof of the sacred regard paid to that divine work—the book of the Revelation,—in the second century.

* A diversity of temper or education produced a diversity of conduct among these men, while yet all seem to have been equally void of the fear and love of God.

future life.—“On which relying they introduce a strange and new religion, and despise the most excruciating tortures, and die with joy. Now let us see if they will rise again, and if their God can help them and deliver them out of our hands.”

Eusebius observes here, that the reader may judge, by analogy, of the fierceness of this persecution in other parts of the empire, from this detail of the affairs at Lyons; and then adds something from the epistle concerning the humility, meekness, and charity of the martyrs; and this he contrasts with the unrelenting spirit of the Novatians, which afterwards appeared in the Church. “They were such sincere followers of Christ, who, though he was in the form of a man, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” that, though elevated to such height of glory, and though they had borne witness for Christ not once or twice only, but often, in a variety of sufferings, yet they assumed not the venerable name of martyrs, nor permitted us to address them as such. But if any of us by letter or word gave them the title, they reproved us vehemently. For it was with much pleasure that they gave the appellation in a peculiar sense to Him who is the FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, the first-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of divine life. And they remembered with respect the deceased martyrs, and said; They indeed were martyrs whom Christ hath dignified to receive to himself in their confession, sealing their testimony by their exit, but we are low and mean confessors. With tears they intreated the brethren to pray fervently for them, that they might be perfected.

They exhibited, however, in real facts, the energy of the character of martyrs, and answered with much boldness to the Gentiles: Their magnanimity, undaunted, calm, and intrepid, was visible to all the world, though the fear of God induced them to refuse the title of martyrs. They humbled themselves under the mighty hand by which they are now exalted.* They were ready to give a modest reason of the hope that was in them before all: They accused none: They took pleasure in commending, none in censuring; and they prayed for their murderers, as Stephen the accomplished martyr did, “Lord lay not this sin to their charge.” And if he played thus for those who stoned him, how much more ought Christians to pray for the brethren?—They never gloried in an unbecoming way over the lapsed; but, on the contrary, they supplied their weaknesses with maternal tenderness, and shed many tears

over them to the Father: they asked life for them, and he gave them it, which they were glad to communicate to their neighbours. Thus in all things they came off victorious before God,—ever cultivating peace,—ever commending peace:—In peace they went to God, leaving neither trouble to their mother the church, nor faction and sedition to the brethren; but joy, peace, unanimity, and charity.”

Eusebius has given us another passage also which deserves attention. Alcibiades, one of the martyrs, had led, before the persecution, the life of an Ascetic:—he used to subsist only on bread and water. As he continued the same regimen while in confinement, it was revealed in a vision to Attalus, after his first contest in the amphitheatre, that Alcibiades did ill not to use the creatures of God, and that he gave an occasion of scandal to others. Alcibiades was hence induced to change his diet, and to partake of the bounty of God with thanksgiving.—Eusebius tells us also of an epistle directed by these martyrs to Eleutherus, the bishop of Rome, in which they give a very honourable encomium of Irenæus the presbyter. Of him we shall have occasion to speak more hereafter. He was appointed successor to Pothinus: he outlived the storm, and governed the Church afterwards with much ability and success. The letter to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, of which Eusebius has given us such large and valuable extracts, furnishes strong proofs of his piety and judgment.

The superstitions, which afterwards arose in so great abundance, and with so much strength: and which, like a dense cloud, so long obscured the light of the Church, seem scarcely to have shaded the glory of those Gallic martyrs in any degree. The case of Alcibiades, and the wholesome check which the divine goodness put to his well-meant austerities, demonstrate that excesses of this nature had not yet gained any remarkable ascendancy in the Church. And the description of the humility and charity of the martyrs shews a spirit much superior to that which we shall have occasion, with regret, to notice in some succeeding annals of martyrdom. In a word, the power of divine grace appears little less than apostolical in the church at Lyons. The only disagreeable circumstance in the whole narrative is the too florid and tumid style, peculiar to the Asiatic Greeks; and which Cicero, in his Rhetorical works, so finely contrasts with the Attic neatness and purity. In a translation it is scarce possible to do justice to thoughts extremely evangelical and spiritual, clothed originally in so tawdry a garb. Yet under this great disadvantage a discerning eye will see much of the “unction” of real godliness.—At first sight we must be struck with the

* The natural enmity of the human mind against the steps of God was never more strongly exemplified than in this persecution. The folly of thinking to defeat the counsel of God appears very conspicuous; and so does the faith and hope of a blessed resurrection,—the peculiar animating theme of true Christians.

† 1 Pet. v.

difference between primitive scriptural Christianity, and that affectation of rational divinity, which has so remarkably gained the ascendant in Christendom in our times. In the account we have read, the good influence of the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and the evil influence of Satan on the other, are brought forward every where to our view. In our times both are concealed, or almost annihilated; and little appears but what is merely human. Whether of the two methods is most agreeable to the plan of the sacred writings, must be obvious to every serious and honest inquirer. Christ's kingdom, in the narrative before us, appears truly scriptural and divine: Christian faith, hope, and charity, do their work under the direction of his Spirit: Christians are humble, meek, heavenly-minded, patient, sustained continually with aid invisible; and we see Satan actively, but unsuccessfully, engaged against them. In the degenerate representations of the Christian religion by many moderns, what a different taste and spirit!—Every thing is of this world!—Policy and ambition leave no room for the exhibition of the work of God and the power of the Holy Ghost: The belief of Satanic influence is ridiculed as weak superstition; and natural, unassisted reason, and the self-sufficiency of the human heart, triumph without measure!

CHAPTER VII.

THE STATE OF CHRISTIANS UNDER THE REIGNS OF COMMODUS, PERTINAX, AND JULIAN.—THE STORY OF PEREGRINUS.

THE reigns of the two last-mentioned emperors, which close the century, are short, and contain no Christian memoirs. That of Commodus is remarkable for the peace granted to the Church of Christ through the world.* The means which divine providence used for this purpose is still more so. Marcia, a woman of low rank, was the favourite concubine of this emperor. She had, on some account not now understood, a predilection for the Christians, and employed her interest with Commodus in their favour.† He was himself the most vicious and profligate of all mortals, though the son of the great Marcus Antoninus. Those, who looked at secular objects and moral decorum alone, might regret the change of emperors. In one particular point only, namely, in his conduct toward the Christians, Commodus was more just and equitable than his father. And the power and goodness of God in making even such wretched characters as Commodus and Marcia to stem the torrent

of persecution, and to afford a breathing time of twelve years under the son, after eighteen years of the most cruel sufferings under the father, deserve to be remarked. For certainly the Church of Christ has no communion with debauchees; and though it be abhorrent, also, in its plan and spirit from the systems of proud philosophers, yet, it is always friendly to every thing virtuous and laudable in society.—The fact is, it has a taste peculiarly its own: God's ways are not like ours.—The gospel now flourished abundantly; and many of the nobility of Rome, with their whole families, embraced it. Such a circumstance would naturally excite the envy of the great. The Roman Senate felt its dignity defiled by innovations, which to them appeared to the last degree contemptible; and to this malignant source, I think, is to be ascribed the only instance of persecution in this reign.

Apollonius, at that time a person renowned for learning and philosophy in Rome, was a sincere Christian; and as a Christian was accused by an informer before Perennis, a magistrate of considerable influence in the reign of Commodus. The law of Antoninus Pius had enacted grievous punishments against the accusers of Christians. One cannot suppose his edict had any force during the reign of his successor Marcus; but under Commodus it was revived; or rather, a new one, still more severe, was enacted, that the accusers should be put to death.‡ Perennis sentenced the accuser accordingly, and his legs were broken. Thus far he seems to have complied with the injunctions of the law: in what follows he obeyed the dictates of his own malice, or rather that of the Senate. He begged of the prisoner with much earnestness, that he would give an account of his faith before the senate and the court. Apollonius complied, and delivered an apology for Christianity; in consequence of which, by a decree of the senate, he was beheaded. It is not quite easy to account for this procedure. It is perhaps the only trial recorded in history where both the accuser and the accused suffered judicially. Eusebius observes, that the laws were still in force, commanding Christians to be put to death, who had been presented before the tribunal. But Adrian, or certainly Antoninus Pius, had abrogated this iniquitous edict of Trajan. Under Marcus it might be revived,—as what severity against Christians was not to be expected from that cruel persecutor? Now Commodus, by naming accusers with death, probably supposed he had sufficiently secured the Christians. Yet, if a formal abrogation of the law against Christians did not actually take place, one may see how Apollonius came to suffer as well as his adversary. In truth, if he had

* Euseb. B. v. c. 19

† Dion. Cassius.

‡ Euseb. *lud.*

been silent, it is very likely he would have saved his own life. Insidious artifices, under the pretence of much respect and desire of information, seem to have drawn him into a measure which cost him so dear:—He died, however, in the best of causes!

There is, in the work of Lucian, a remarkable story of a person named Peregrinus, which, as it falls in with this century, and throws light on the character of the Christians who then lived, deserves to be here introduced. "In his youth," says this author, "he fell into shameful crimes, for which he was near losing his life in Armenia and Asia. I will not dwell on those crimes; but I am persuaded that what I am about to say is worthy of attention. There is none of you but know, that being chagrined because his father was still alive after being upwards of sixty years of age, he strangled him. The rumour of so black a crime being spread abroad, he betrayed his guilt by flight. He wandered about in divers countries to conceal the place of his retreat, till, upon coming into Judæa, he learnt the admirable doctrine of the Christians, by conversing with their priests and teachers. In a little time he shewed them that they were but children compared to himself: for he became not only a prophet, but the head of their congregation: in a word, he was every thing to them: he explained their books, and composed some himself; inasmuch that they spoke of him sometimes as a god, and certainly considered him as a lawgiver and a ruler.—However, these people, in fact, adore that great Person who had been crucified in Palestine, as being the first who taught men that religion.—While these things were going on, Peregrinus was apprehended and put in prison on account of his being a Christian. This disgrace loaded him with honour: it was the very thing he ardently desired: it made him more reputable among those of that persuasion, and furnished him with a power of performing wonders. The Christians, grievously afflicted at his confinement, used their utmost efforts to procure him his liberty; and as they saw they could not compass it, they provided abundantly for all his wants, and rendered him all imaginable services. There was seen, by break of day, at the prison-gate, a company of old women, widows, and orphans, some of whom, after having occupied the guard with money, passed the night with him: there they partook together of elegant repasts, and entertained one another with religious discourses. They called that excellent man the New Socrates. There came even Christians, deputed from many cities of Asia, to converse with him, to comfort him, and to bring him supplies of money; for the care and diligence which the Christians exert in these junctures is incredible: they spare nothing in such cases.

They sent, therefore, large sums to Peregrinus; and his confinement was to him an occasion of amassing great riches; for these poor creatures are firmly persuaded they shall one day enjoy immortal life; therefore they despise death with wonderful courage, and offer themselves voluntarily to punishment. Their first lawgiver has put it into their heads that they are all brethren. Since they separated from us, they persevere in rejecting the gods of the Grecians, and in worshipping that deceiver who was crucified: they regulate their manners and conduct by his laws; they despise, therefore, all earthly possessions, and use them in common. Therefore if any magician or juggler, any cunning fellow who knows how to make his advantage of opportunity, happens to get into their society, he immediately grows rich; because it is easy for a man of this sort to abuse the simplicity of these silly people. However Peregrinus was set at liberty by the president of Syria, who was a lover of philosophy and of its professors; and who, having perceived that this man courted death out of vanity and a fondness for renown, released him, displaying him too much to have a desire of inflicting capital punishment on him. Peregrinus returned into his own country, and as some were inclined to prosecute him on account of his parricide, he gave all his wealth to his fellow-citizens, who, being gained by this liberality, imposed silence on his accusers. He left his country a second time in order to travel, reckoning he should find every thing he wanted in the purses of the Christians, who were punctual in accompanying him wherever he went, and in supplying him with all things in abundance. He subsisted in this manner for a considerable time; but having done something which the Christians abhor,—they saw aim, I think, make use of some means forbidden amongst them,—he was abandoned by them; inasmuch that having not any longer the means of support, he would fain have revoked the donation he had made to his country."

The native place of this extraordinary man was Parium in Mysia. After his renunciation of Christianity he assumed the character of a philosopher. In that light he is mentioned by several heathen authors; and this part he acted till the time of his death; when, in his old age, he threw himself into the flames, probably because suicide was honourable in the eyes of the Gentiles, and because Empedocles, a brother philosopher, had thrown himself into the volcano at mount Ætna.—A remark may here be made on the writer, on the hero, and on the Christians of those times.

It will not be necessary to give an anxious answer to the raileries, cavils, and insinua-

* Lardner's Collect. Vol. II. C. 19.—Bulletin's Establishment of Christianity.

tions of Lucian in this narrative. Whoever knows any thing of real Christianity, and the usual obloquy thrown upon it, will easily make just deductions, and separate what is true from what is false. Lucian was one of the most facetious authors of antiquity: He doubtless possessed the talents of wit and satire in a supreme degree. But truth and candour are not usually to be expected from writers of this sort: Lucian, like others of the same vein, had his eyes turned malignantly towards all objects but himself: He was intolerably self-conceited, and may be ranked with Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume, and other modern writers of that stamp: He was sarcastic, unfeeling, and suspicious of evil every where except in his own heart. The common consequence of such a temper, indulged without restraint, is a sceptical indifference to all sorts of religion, a contempt of every mode of it without distinction, and supercilious self-applause on account of superior discernment. Such men, of all others, seem most to fall under the censure of the wise man, **HE THAT TRUSTETH HIS OWN HEART IS A FOOL.** They take for granted the sincerity, humanity, and benevolence of their own hearts, with as much positiveness as they do the obliquity and hypocrisy of other men's. Antiquity had one Lucian; and, it must be confessed, the absurdities of paganism afforded him a large field of satire, which, eventually, was not unserviceable to the progress of Christianity: Our times have **ABOUNDED** with writers of this stamp; and it is one of the most striking characteristics of the depravity of modern taste, that they are so much read and esteemed.

Peregrinus is no very uncommon character. On a less extended scale, men of extreme wickedness in a similar way may frequently be noticed: Men, whose early life have been devoted to nothing but vices: Then, afterwards, something of the garb and mode of real Christians is assumed by these deceivers. But it is not every one who has the abilities of Peregrinus to wear the hypocritical garb so assumed with consummate address, and to impose on genuine Christians of undoubted discernment. The unfeeling heart of Lucian appears to rejoice in the impositions of Peregrinus; and particularly, that he was able to impose on Christians so long and so completely. A philanthropic mind would rather have been tempted to mourn over the depravity of human nature, that it should be capable of such wickedness. Providence, however, often sets a dismal mark upon such men in this life. Peregrinus lived long enough to be proved a complete impostor, and to be rendered intolerable to Christians; he acted the philosopher afterwards, it seems, a long time: for what is often called philosophy is consistent enough with much hy-

pocrisy; and his dreadful end should be awfully instructive to mankind.

Yet, what is there in all this account of the Christians, discoloured as it is by the malignant author, which does not tell to their honour? While Peregrinus made a creditable profession, they received and rejoiced in him: they did not pretend to infallibility. His superior parts and artifice enabled him a long time to deceive. It is probable that he avoided as much as possible the society of the most sagacious and penetrating among the Christians. The followers of Jesus had learnt to spare their neighbours' "motives, and to feel their own beams." They were most solicitously guarded against that species of deception which is the most fatal, namely, the delusion of a man's own heart. If many of them were hence too much exposed to the snares of designing men, the thing tells surely to their honour, rather than to their disgrace. As for the rest; their liberality, their zeal, their compassion, their brotherly love, their fortitude, their heavenly-mindedness, are confessed in all this narrative to have been exceeding great. I rejoice to hear from the mouth of an enemy such a testimony to the character of Christians: it is one of the best which I can meet with in the second century: **Amidst** such a dearth of materials it was not to be omitted. In morals Christians must then have been, at least, much superior to the rest of mankind; and it is only to be lamented, that he who could relate this story, had not the wisdom to make a profitable use of it for himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME ACCOUNT OF CHRISTIAN AUTHORS WHO FLOURISHED IN THIS CENTURY.

It may throw additional light on the history of Christian doctrine and manners in this century, to give a brief view of Christian authors. Some of the most renowned have been already spoken to, and a few more of great respectability must be deferred to the next century, because they outlived this.

Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, lived under the reign of Marcus Antoninus and his son Commodus. He wrote many epistles to various churches, which demonstrate his care and vigilance in support of Christianity;—a pleasing proof that Corinth was singularly favoured by being possessed of a zealous and charitable pastor; though of his labours there, and of the state of the numerous society of Christians under his ministry, we have no account. He wrote to the Lacedæmonians an instruction concerning the doctrine of the gospel, and an exhortation to

peace and unity. He wrote to the Athenians also; and, by his testimony, he confirms the account before given of their declension after the martyrdom of Publius; and of their revival under the care of Quadratus; and he here informs us that Dionysius the Areopagite was the first bishop of Athens. In his letter to the Christians in Crete he highly commends Philip the bishop, and guards them against heresies. In his epistle to the churches of Pontus, he directs that all penitents should be received who return to the Church, whatever their past crimes have been, even, if guilty of heresy itself. One may hence infer, that discipline was as yet administered with much strictness in the churches; and that purity of doctrine, as well as of life and manners, were looked on as of high importance, inasmuch that some were inclined to a degree of rigour incompatible with the gospel, which promises full and free forgiveness through Christ to every returning sinner, without limitations or exceptions. Such inferences concerning the manners and spirit of the Christians at that time seem obvious and natural: The present state of church discipline among all denominations of Christians in England would undoubtedly suggest very different reflections.—He writes also to Pinytus, bishop of the Gnossians in Crete, advising him not to impose on the Christians the heavy burden of the obligation to preserve their virginity, but to have respect to the weakness incident to most of them. It seemed worth while to mention this also as a proof that monastic austerities were beginning to appear in the Church; and that the best men, after the example of the Apostles, laboured to control them. Pinytus in his reply extols Dionysius, and exhorts him to afford his people more solid nourishment, lest, being always fed with milk, they should remain in a state of infancy. This answer speaks something of the depth of thought and knowledge in godliness, with which Pinytus was endowed.

In his letter to the Romans, directed to Soter their bishop, he recommends to them to continue a charitable custom, which, from their first plantation, they had always practised; namely,—to send relief to divers Churches throughout the world, and to assist particularly those who were condemned to the mines;—a strong proof both that the Roman church continued opulent and numerous, and also that they still partook much of the spirit of Christ.^b

Theophilus of Antioch is a person of whom it were to be wished that we had a larger account. He was brought up a Gentile, was educated in all the knowledge then reputable in the world, and was doubtless a man of considerable parts and learning. His conversion to Christianity seems to have

been the most reasonable thing imaginable. The Holy Spirit in his operations ever appears to adapt himself much to different tempers. Theophilus was a reasoner; and the grace of God, while it convinced him of his own inability to clear up his doubts, effectually enlightened his understanding. The belief of a resurrection appears to have been a mighty impediment to his reception of the gospel: It contradicted his philosophy.—The notions of proud philosophers vary in different ages; but they seldom fail in some form or other, to withstand the religion of Jesus.

Of his labours in his bishopric of Antioch we have no account. He carried on a correspondence with a learned man named Autolycus; but with what success we are not told. He appears also to have been very vigilant against fashionable heresies. He lived thirteen years in his bishopric; and died in peace about the second or third year of Commodus.*

Melito, bishop of Sardis, from the very little of his remains that are extant, may be conceived to be one whom God might make use of for the revival of godliness in that drooping church. The very titles of some of his works excite our regret for the loss of them. One of them is on the submission of the senses to faith; another on the soul, the body, and the spirit; another on God incarnate. A fragment of his, preserved by the author of the Chronicle, called the Alexandrian, says, "that the Christians do not adore insensible stones, but that they worship one God alone, who is before all things and in all things, and Jesus Christ who is God before all ages." He lived under the reign of Marcus Antoninus. His unsuccessful but masterly apology presented to that emperor has already been noticed. He travelled into the east on purpose to collect authentic ecclesiastical information; and he gives us a catalogue of the sacred books of the Old Testament. He died and was buried at Sardis;—a man whom Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, his contemporary, calls an eunuch, that is, one who made himself an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake.^d Several such, I apprehend, were in the primitive times. But the depravity of human nature is ever pushing men into extremes. There soon arose some, who made a self-righteous use of these instances of self-denial; and clogged them with unwarrantable excesses. The contrary extreme is now so prevalent, that,—if a person were to follow the example of Melito on the same generous principles which our Saviour expresses,—it would be thought very extraordinary, and even ridiculous. But, whatever has the

* Euseb. B. iv. C. 25. and Cave's Life of Theophilus.

^d Matthew xix. Euseb. B. iv. C. 25. Dupin and Cave.

^b Euseb. B. iv. C. 23.

emotion of Holy Weir, should be noticed to the honour of those who practise it, whether agreeable to the taste of the age we live in or not, unless we mean to set up the eighteenth century as a sort of Pope to judge the foregoing seventeen.—The same Polykrates observes of him, that his actions were regulated by the motions of the Holy Ghost; and that he lies interred at Sardis, where he expects the judgment and resurrection.

Bardesanes of Mesopotamia, a man renowned for learning and eloquence, escaped not the pollution of the fantastic heresy of Valentinian. His talents and his love of refinement were probably his snare; but, as he afterwards condemned the fabulous dreams by which he had been infatuated, and as he is allowed to be sound in the main, some relics of his former heresy might be left without materially injuring either his faith or his practice. I know no particular reason for mentioning him at all, but for the sake of introducing a remarkable passage of his writings, preserved by Eusebius,* which shews at once the great progress and the powerful energy of Christianity.

"In Parthia," says he, "polygamy is allowed and practised, but the Christians of Parthia practise it not. In Persia the same may be said with respect to incest. In Bactria, and in Gaul the rights of matrimony are defiled with impunity. The Christians there act not thus. In truth, wherever they reside, they triumph in their practice over the worst of laws and the worst of customs." This eulogium is not more strong than just.—In what age did human inventions, whether philosophical or religious, produce such fruits as these?

Miltiades was usefully engaged in discriminating the genuine influences of the Holy Spirit from the fictitious,—of which unhappy instances had then appeared. False prophets evinced at first the most stupid ignorance, and afterwards a distempered imagination and furious frenzy. Miltiades shewed that the influence of the Holy Spirit described in scripture, was sober, consistent, reasonable. There is no new thing under the sun; impostures and delusions exist at this day;—and why should it not be thought as reasonable now as it was then—to discriminate genuine from fictitious or diabolical influences, by laying down the true marks and evidences of each, instead of scorefully treating all alike as enthusiasts? The extraordinary and miraculous influences chiefly come under Miltiades's inspection; for these were at that time very common in the Christian church; so were delusive pretences also; particularly those of Montanus and of his followers.—Let the discerning reader apply the observations to be made on these and similar facts to our own times.

* Euseb. Precep. Evang. Jortin's Remarks IV.

Apollinarius of Hierapolis wrote several books under the reign of Marcus Antoninus. We have at present only their titles. One of them was a defence of Christianity, dedicated to the emperor. The work, of which we know the most, from a fragment preserved in Eusebius, is that against the Montanists which will fall under our observation in the next chapter.

Athenagoras, towards the latter end of this century, wrote an apology for the Christian religion. His testimony to the doctrine of the Trinity, contained in it, expresses something besides a speculative belief of it. It seems to have appeared to him of essential consequence in practical godliness. He is a writer not mentioned by Eusebius. De Fin does him injustice by observing that he recommends the worship of angels. I have not access to his apology, but shall give a remarkable quotation from Dr. Waterland, to whom I am obliged for the only valuable information I have of this author.† Speaking of Christians, he describes them as "men that made small account of the present life, but were intent only upon contemplating God and knowing his Word who is from him,—what union the Son has with the Father, what communion the Father has with the Son, what the Spirit is, and what the union and distinction are of such as united, the Spirit, the Son, and the Father."

If this be true,—and Athenagoras may well be credited for the fact—it is not to be wondered at, that the primitive Christians were so anxiously tenants of the doctrine. It was the climate in which alone Christian fruit could grow. Their speculations were not merely abstracted. They found, in the view of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, something of that energy which could raise them from earth to heaven. That is, they found the peculiar truths of the gospel, which are so closely interwoven with the doctrine of the Trinity. The right use of the doctrine is briefly, but strongly intimated in this passage;—and the connection between Christian principles and practice appears. In truth, a Trinitarian speculatist may be as worldly-minded as any other person. His doctrine, however, contains that which alone can subvert a man for "his affections on things above."

CHAPTER IX.

THE HERESIES AND CONTROVERSIES OF THE CENTURY REVIEWED, AND AN IDEA OF THE STATE AND PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY DURING THE COURSE OF IT.

My plan calls me not to notice minutely all the heresies which appeared in this century.

† Epiphanius Heres. 54. 1. See Dr. Waterland's Importance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

tury: but I would not omit them, whenever they may throw light on the work of God's Holy Spirit and the progress of godliness. —On their own account, they deserved not much attention; yet it was necessary to examine and confute some of them: and Irenæus acted charitably in so doing. It is, however, to be regretted, that in his celebrated work against heresies, he should be obliged to employ so much time on scenes of nonsense. —Let it be remarked in general, that the same opposition to the Deity of Christ, or his manhood, and the same insidious methods of depreciating or abusing the doctrines of grace, continued in the second century, which had begun in the first, with this difference, that they were now multiplied, varied, complicated, and refined by endless subtleties and fancies, in which the poverty of taste and genius, so common in a period when letters are declining, discovers itself no less than the Christian doctrine. Like spots in the sun, however, they vanished and disappeared from time to time; though revived again in different forms and circumstances. Not one of the heresiarchs of this century was able to create a strong and permanent interest; and it is no little proof of the continued goodness and grace of God to his Church, that the sound Christians still kept themselves separate and distinct, and preserved the purity of discipline.

It has often been said, that many have been enlisted among heretics, who were real Christians. When I see a proof of this, I shall take notice of it. But of the heretics in the second century, I fear, in general, no such favourable judgment ought to be passed. The state of Christian affairs, in truth, was such as to afford no probable reason for any real good man to dissent. Where was there more of piety and virtue to be found than among the general society of Christians? And how could any persons be more exposed to the cross of Christ than they were?

1. The first set of heretics of this century, were those who opposed or corrupted the doctrines of the person of Christ. A single quotation from Eusebius may be sufficient, as a specimen.

Speaking of the books which were published in these times, he observes, "Among them there is found a volume written against the heresy of Artemon, which Paulus of Samosata in our days endeavoured to revive." When this book had confuted the said presumptuous heresy, which maintained Christ to be a mere man, and that this was an ancient opinion; after many leaves tending to the confutation of this blasphemous falsehood, the author writes thus: 'They affirm that all our ancestors, even the apostles themselves, were of that opinion, and taught the same with them, and that this

their true doctrine was preached and embraced to the time of Victor, the thirteenth bishop of Rome after Peter, and was corrupted by his successor Zephyrinus. This might carry a plausible appearance of truth, were it not, in the first place, contradicted by the Holy Scriptures, and in the next, by the books of several persons, which they published long before the time of Victor, against the Gentiles in the defence of the truth and in confutation of the heresies of their times, I mean Justin, Miltiades, Tatian, and Clement, with many others, in all which works Christ is preached and published to be God. Who knoweth not that the works of Irenæus, Melito, and all other Christians do confess Christ to be both God and Man? In fine, how many psalms, and hymns, and canticles were written from the beginning by faithful Christians, which celebrate Christ, the Word of God, as no other than God indeed? How then is it possible, according to their report, that our ancestors, to the days of Victor, should have preached in that way, when the creed of the Church for so many years is pronounced as certain, and known to all the world? And ought they not to be ashamed to report such falsehoods of Victor, when they know it to be a fact, that this very Victor excommunicated Theodotus, a tanner, the father of this apostasy, who denied the divinity of Christ, because he first affirmed Christ to be only man. If Victor, as they report, had been of these blasphemous sentiments, how could he have excommunicated Theodotus the author of the heresy?

Victor's government was about the close of the second century. The anonymous author before us writes most probably in the former part of the third. Nor is his testimony much invalidated by his being anonymous. The facts to which he speaks were notorious and undeniable. We see hence, that all parties, notwithstanding the contempt which some affect of the testimony of antiquity and tradition, are glad to avail themselves of it where they can; which is itself a proof of the tacit consent of all mankind, that this testimony, though by no means decisive, nor such as ought ever to be put in competition with scripture, yet weighs something, and ought not to be treated with unreserved disdain. In our own days the same attempt has been made in the same cause; —with what probability of success, in the way of sound argument, let the reader, who has considered the passage I have quoted from Eusebius, judge for himself. In fact, it appears that a denial of the Deity of Christ could not find any patron within the pale of the Church for the first two hundred years. The prevalence of sentiments derogatory to the person and offices of Christ was reserved for a later period. Every person of any

eminence in the Church for judgment and piety holds unequivocally an opposite language. In some of the most renowned we have seen it all along in the course of this century.

This Theodotus was a citizen of Byzantium, a tanner, but a man of parts and learning. Heretical perversions of Scripture have often been invented by such persons: Pride and self-conceit seem to have a peculiar ascendancy over men who have acquired knowledge in private by their own industry: And doubtless one of the best advantages of public seminaries is this,—that modesty and reasonable submission are inculcated in them; and men, by seeing and feeling their own inferiority, are taught to think more lowly of their own attainments. This self-taught tanner speculated; felt himself important enough to be singular; and revived the heresy of Ebion. He was brought with some other Christians before persecuting magistrates: His companions honestly confessed Christ and suffered: He was the only man of the company who denied him. In truth, he had no principles strong enough to induce him to bear the cross of Christ. Theodotus lived still a denier of Christ, and being afterwards upbraided for denying his God; "No," says he, "I have not denied God, but man; for Christ is no more."^h His heresy hence obtained a new name, that of the God-denying apostasy.ⁱ Persecution frequently does in this life, in part, what the last day will do completely,—separate wheat from tares!

2. The controversy concerning the proper time of the observation of Easter, which had been amicably adjusted between Polycarp of Smyrna and Anicetus of Rome, who had agreed to differ, was unhappily revived towards the close of this century: Synods were held concerning it: and an uniformity was attempted in vain throughout the Church. Victor of Rome, with much arrogance and temerity, as if he had felt the very soul of the future papacy formed in himself, inveighed against the Asiatic churches, and pronounced them excommunicated persons. The firmness, moderation, and charity of one man was of great service in quashing this dangerous contention. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, rebuked the uncharitable spirit of Victor, reminded him of the union between Polycarp and his predecessor Anicetus, notwithstanding their difference of sentiment and practice in this point, and pressed the strong obligation of Christians to love and unity, though they might differ in smaller matters; and surely a smaller matter of diversity was scarcely ever known to occasion contention.

The particulars of the debate are not worthy of recital.—Certain fundamentals being stated in the first place, in which all real

Christians are united, they may safely be left, each society to follow its private judgment in other things; and,—surely,—yet hold the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. But that this was effected with so much difficulty, and that so slight a subject should appear of so great a moment at this time, seems no small proof that the power of true godliness had suffered some declension; and was an omen, towards the close of this century, of the decay of the happy effects of the first great effusion of the Spirit. When faith and love are simple, strong, and eminently active, such subjects of debate are ever known to vanish like mists before the sun.

3. The Church was internally shaken and much disfigured by the heresy of Montanus. This is the account of it given by Apollinaris of Hierapolis, who took pains to confute it.^k "Being lately at Ancyra in Galatia, I found the Church throughout filled,—not with prophets, as they call them, but with false prophets; where with the help of the Lord, I disputed publicly for many days against them, so that the Church rejoiced and was confirmed in the truth; and the adversaries were vexed and murmured. It originated in the following manner: There is a village in Mysia, a region of Phrygia, called Ardaba, where we are told that Montanus, a late convert in the time of Gratus, proconsul of Asia, gave advantage to Satan by being elated with ambition. The man behaved in a frantic manner, and pretended to prophecy. Some who heard him, checked him as a lunatic, and forbade his public exhibitions, mindful of our Saviour's predictions and warnings against false prophets: but others boasted of him as endued with the Holy Ghost, and forgetting the divine admonitions, were so ensnared by his arts as to encourage the imposture. Two women were by Satan possessed of the same spirit, and spake foolish and fanatical things. They gloried in their own supposed superior sanctity and happiness; and were deluded with the most flattering expectations.—Few of the Phrygians were seduced, though they took upon them to revile every Church under heaven which did not pay homage to their pretended inspirations. The faithful throughout Asia in frequent synods examined and condemned the heresy."

It has ever been one of the greatest trials to men really led by the Spirit of God,—besides the open opposition of the profane,—to be obliged to encounter the subtle devices of Satan, who often raises up pretended illuminations, and so connects them with delusion, folly, wickedness and self-conceit, that they expose true godliness to the imputation of enthusiasm, and to contempt and disgrace. The marks of distinction are plain

^h Damascen. Heres. 54. ⁱ Agnostus, anastasia.

^k Euseb. B. C. 14.

to minds which are serious and of tolerable judgment and discretion ; but, men, void of the fear of God will not distinguish. We see here an instance, of what has often been repeated from that day to the present in the Church of Christ ; and Christians should never fail to do now, what they then did,—namely,—they should examine, expose, condemn, and separate themselves from such delusions : The enthusiasts of every age follow the pattern of Montanus in folly, pride, and uncharitableness : Nothing happens here but what is foretold in Scripture ; and in truth, delusions of this sort so generally accompany the real work of God, that wherever that appears, these very seldom fail to appear also.

4. But the eruptions of fanaticism are too wild and unnatural to remain long in any degree of strength. Whatever high pretensions they make to the influences of the Divine Spirit, they are ever unfavourable to them in reality ; not only by their unholy tendency during the paroxysms of zeal, but much more so by the effects of contemptuous profaneness and incredulous scepticism which they leave behind them. It is for the sake of these chiefly that Satan seems to invent and support such delusions.—But his grand resource against the gospel is drawn from contrivances more congenial with the nature of man. Human philosophy, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ, formed the last corruption of this century ;—which I shall lay open, to the best of my judgment, from the lights of history. It was toward the close of the century that it made its appearance, nor were the effects of it very great at present : In the next century they appeared very distinctly.

Alexandria was at this time the most renowned seminary of learning. A sort of philosophers there appeared who called themselves Eclectics, because, without tying themselves down to any one set of rules, they chose what they thought most agreeable to truth from different masters and sects. Their pretensions were specious ; and while they preserved the appearance of candour, moderation, and dispassionate inquiry, they administered much fuel to the pride of men leaning to their own understandings. Ammonius Saccas, a famous Alexandrian teacher, seems to have reduced the opinions of this sect to a system. Plato was his principal guide ; but he invented many things of which Plato never dreamed. What his religious profession was is disputed among the learned. Undoubtedly he was educated a Christian ; and, though Porphyry, in his enmity against Christianity, observes that he forsook the gospel and returned to gentilism, yet the testimony of Eusebius,¹ who must

have known, seems decisive to the contrary ;—it proves, that he continued a Christian all his days : His tracts on the agreement of Moses and Jesus, and his harmony of the four gospels demonstrate that he desired to be considered as a Christian. This man fancied that all religions, vulgar and philosophical, Grecian and barbarous, Jewish and Gentile, meant the same thing at bottom. He undertook, by allegorizing and subtilizing various fables and systems, to make up a coalition of all sects and religions ; and, from his labours continued by his disciples—some of whose works still remain,—his followers were taught to look on Jew, Philosopher, vulgar Pagan, and Christian, as all of the same creed.

Dr. Lardner, in opposition to Mosheim, who seems to have very successfully illustrated this matter, contends that there were no such motley mixed characters, and that the scheme is chimerical. I have attended closely to Dr. Lardner's own account of this teacher ; and also to his review of philosophers in the third and following centuries ; and it appears to me, that persons of the class described did actually exist. Ammonius himself seems to have been, if I may be allowed the expression, a Pagano-Christian. That Eusebius and Porphyry should each claim him for their own, is no little proof of his ambiguous character ; and I wish we may not have too melancholy proofs of the same thing, when we come to consider the characters of many of the fathers who followed. Longinus, who was of the same school, though more a philologist than a philosopher, in his well-known respectful quotation from Moses, evinces that he was tinged with a similar spirit. Plotinus is largely and fully in the same scheme. Who knows whether to call Ammonius the historian, and Chalcidius, Christian or Pagan ? They affected to be both ; or rather pretended that both meant the same thing ; and in the fourth and fifth century, though some, with Porphyry, through the virulence of their opposition, were decided enemies of Christ, it is certain that many ambiguous characters abounded among the Christians.

In truth, we see in every age similar scenes. The gospel in its infancy has to struggle with the open and avowed enmity of all mankind. He, whose decisive power alone can do it, after floods of persecution and a thousand discouragements, gives his religion a settlement in the world too strong to be overturned, as its enemies hoped at first would be the case. The light of divine truth fails not to make some impressions on minds by no means converted through it to God. Christianity, though it enforces its truths with much greater clearness than natural religion does ; and though it proves its superiority, by exhibiting men who practise accordingly,

¹ B. vi. C. 13. Ec. Hist.

still has many truths in common with natural religion: Thence ingenuous persons are ready to persuade themselves, that their philosophy and the gospel mean the same in substance: They compliment Christianity with some respectful attention, and yet studiously avoid the cross of Christ, and the precise peculiarities of the gospel, in order to preserve their credit in the world. We may all have so much noticed this disposition in men, and the number of doubtful characters in consequence, that Mosheim's account cannot, I think, appear difficult of admission.

Undoubtedly the appearance of persons of this sort is a sure symptom that the gospel is raised to some degree of eminence and stability in the world. In the first century such an ambiguous character would have been a rare phenomenon. Philosophers found no desire to coalesce with a religion contemptible in their eyes in all respects. It was not till numbers gave it some respectability, that a coalition of that kind took place. Seneca would have thought himself sufficiently liberal in not persecuting, but only despising the same religion, which Ammonius, a century afterwards, deigned to incorporate, in pretence at least, with his philosophy.—It has been observed, that the attempt of the court of Charles the First to draw over some of the parliamentary leaders to their interest, was a sure sign of the diminution of regal despotism. Satan beheld the decay of his empire of idolatry and philosophy in the same light; and it behoved him to try the same arts to preserve what remained. Melancholy and disastrous as was the evil we are contemplating, and even more decisively destructive to the progress of vital godliness than any other which had yet appeared, it was, however, an evidence of the victorious strength of the gospel, and a confession of weakness on the part of paganism.

In carrying on these facts of seduction, the insidiousness of such middle characters consisted much in expatiating on the truths which lie in common, as of the greatest importance; and in reducing, as far as in them lay, the peculiar truths of the gospel into oblivion. It was just in this manner, I remember, that a clergyman^a speaks in a celebrated sermon preached on the accession of James the Second. While he deals out strains of fulsome adulation to the sovereign, he answers the objection against him drawn from his religion, by observing of what little importance opinions were; and that moral and practical matters were alone worthy of consideration. The conduct of James, in a little time after, shewed the weakness of this reasoning: and the effects of this philosophical evil, which like leaven soon spread

in some faint degree over the whole Church, shewed too plainly that pure and undefiled sentiments of religion are of high importance.

We have hitherto found it no hard matter to discover, in the teachers and writers of Christianity, the vital doctrines of Christ. We shall now perceive that the most precious truths of the gospel begin to be less attended to, and less brought into view. Even Justin Martyr, before the period of eclectic corruption, by his fondness for Plato, adulterated the gospel in some degree, as we have observed, particularly in the article of free-will. Tatian, his scholar, went bolder lengths, and deserved the name of heretic. He dealt largely in the merits of continence and chastity; and these virtues, pushed into extravagant excesses, under the notion of superior purity, became great engines of self-righteousness and superstition, and obscured men's views of the faith of Christ, and darkened the whole face of Christianity. Under the fostering hand of Ammonius and his followers, this fictitious holiness, disguised under the appearance of eminent sanctity, was formed into a system; and it soon began to generate the worst of evils. That man is altogether fallen,—that he is to be justified wholly by the faith of Christ,—that his atonement and mediation alone procures us access to God and eternal life,—that holiness is the effect of divine grace, and is the proper work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of man;—these,—and if there be any other similar evangelical truths,—as it was not possible to mix them with Platonism, faded gradually in the Church, and were at length partly denied, and partly forgotten.

St. Paul's caution against philosophy and vain deceit, it appears, was now fatally neglected by the Christians. False humility, "will worship," curious and proud refinements, bodily austerities mixed with high self-righteous pretensions, ignorance of Christ and of the true life of faith in him, miserably superseded by ceremonies and superstitions.—All these things are divinely detested in the second chapter to the Colossians; and, so far as words can do it, the true defence against them is powerfully described and enforced.

The cultivation itself of the human mind, when carried on in the best manner, is apt to be abused, by fallen man to the perversion of the gospel. Yet I would not place the mathematics and natural philosophy on the same footing as the Platonic or Stoical doctrines. In truth, philosophy is too respectable a name for these last: As they were managed in the school of Ammonius or of Antoninus, they displayed little that deserved the attention of a wise man: They were either romantic, or absolutely false. The philosophy of the moderns, when applied to abstract quantity, or to the works of

^a The vicar of Newcastle.

nature, is, doubtless, possessed of truth and solidity, yet great care is requisite to keep even modern philosophy within its due bounds; and to prevent its encroachments on Christianity: and the danger of being elated by pride, and of being made too wise for the teaching of God's Holy Spirit, is common to this with all other sorts of secular knowledge. In regard to what is called moral philosophy and metaphysics, these seem much more nearly allied to the ancient philosophical evils, and have ever been dangerous to religion: fatal mistakes have been made through their means; and in general, if we except a very small portion of natural truths which are agreeable to the moral sense and conscience of mankind, they appear,—at least,—when conducted, as they have usually been, by un-evangelical persons,—to be the very same sort of mischievous speculation and refinement against which the apostle to the Colossians speaks. Certainly his cautions against philosophy are equally applicable to THEM;—for THEY have been found to militate against the vital truths of Christianity, and to corrupt the gospel in our times as much as the cultivation of the more-ancient philosophy corrupted it in early ages.—I would here be understood, in both cases, to refer to matter of fact, and not to imagi-

nary suppositions.—In fact, the systems of the moral and metaphysical writers have rarely been founded on Christian principles, and yet they have pretended to incorporate themselves with the gospel. The effect of such combination must ever prove mischievous, particularly when addressed to the reason of man, prejudiced by self-conceit and the love of sin.

And here we close the view of the second century; which, for the most part, exhibited proofs of divine grace as strong, or nearly so, as the first. We have seen the same unshaken and simple faith of Jesus, the same love of God and of the brethren; and,—that in which they singularly excelled modern Christians,—the same heavenly spirit and victory over the world. But a dark shade is enveloping these divine glories. The Spirit of God is grieved already by the ambitious intrusions of self-righteousness, argumentative refinements, and Pharisaic pride; and though it be more common to represent the most sensible decay of godliness as commencing a century later, to me it seems already begun. The surviving effects, however, of the first effusion of the Spirit, and also the effects of some rich additional communications of the same Spirit will appear in the third century.

CENTURY III.

CHAPTER I.

IRENÆUS.

BEFORE we proceed with the orderly course of events in this century, it may be convenient to continue the account of authors who properly belonged to the last, though they survived the conclusion of it. We meet with four celebrated characters of this description; Irenæus, Tertullian, Pantanus, and Clement of Alexandria.

Of Irenæus it were to be wished we had a more copious account: The place of his birth is quite uncertain. His name, however, points him out to be a Grecian. His instructors in Christianity were Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, and the renowned Polycarp. The former is generally allowed to have been a man of real sanctity, but of slender capacity. He, as well as Polycarp, had been a disciple of St. John; and with all the imbecility of judgment which is ascribed to him, might, under God, have been

of signal service to Irenæus. The instructions of Polycarp, however, seem to have made the deepest impressions on his mind from early life.

The church of Lyons, we have seen, was a daughter of the church of Smyrna, or of the other neighbouring churches. Pothinus, the bishop, must have been a Greek as well as Irenæus; who, as Presbyter, assisted the venerable prelate in his old age. After the death of Pothinus, about the year 169, Irenæus succeeded him. Never was any pastor more severely tried by a tempestuous ætææ. Violent persecution without, and subtle heresies within, called for the exertion, at once, of consummate dexterity and of magnanimous resolution. Irenæus was favoured with a large measure of both; and he weathered out the storm. But heresy proved a more constant enemy than persecution. The multiplication of it, in endless refinements, induced him to write his book against heresies, which must have been at that time a very seasonable work.—His vigour and

charity also in composing the insignificant disputes about Easter, as well as his concern in writing the account of the martyrdoms of Lyons have already been mentioned.

The beginning of the third century was marked with the persecution under Septimius Severus, the successor of Julian. Severus himself had, most probably, directed the persecution at Lyons, in which Potinus suffered; and when he began to persecute as emperor, he would naturally recal the idea of Lyons, and of the persecution in which he had had so large a share. Gregory of Tours, and the ancient martyrologists inform us, "that after several torments Irenæus was put to death, and together with him almost all the Christians of that populous city, whose numbers could not be reckoned, so that the streets of Lyons flowed with the blood of Christians." We may easily allow that this is a rhetorical exaggeration. Yet I see no reason with some to deny altogether the truth of this second persecution at Lyons, or of Irenæus suffering martyrdom under it. Gregory of Tours is not the best authority, but there is no circumstance of improbability here. The silence of Eusebius affords no argument to the contrary, because he is far from relating the deaths of all celebrated Christians. Of those in the West particularly, he is by no means copious in his narrative; and the natural cruelty of Severus, added to his former connection with Lyons, gives to the fact a strong degree of credibility.

The labours of Irenæus in Gaul were doubtless of the most solid utility. Nor is it a small instance of the humility and charity of this great man,—accurately versed as he was in Grecian literature,—that he took pains to learn the barbarous dialect of Gaul, conformed himself to the rustic manners of an illiterate people, and renounced the politeness and elegant traits of his own country, for the love of souls. Rare fruit of Christian charity! and highly worthy the attention of pastors in an age like this, in which so many undertake to preach Christianity; and yet seem little desirous of distinguishing themselves in what peculiarly belongs to their office!

His book of heresies is nearly the whole of his writings that have escaped the injuries of time. His assiduity and penetration are equally remarkable in analyzing and dissecting all the fanciful schemes, with which heretics had disgraced the Christian name. It is easy to notice that his views of the gospel are of the same cast as those of Justin,^a whom he quotes, and with whose works he appears to have been acquainted. Like him he is silent, or nearly so, on the election of grace; which from the instructors of his early

age he must often have heard: And, like him he defends the Arminian notion of free-will; and by similar arguments.^b His philosophy seems to have had its usual influence on the mind,—in darkening some truths of Scripture, and in mixing the doctrine of Christ with human inventions.

There is not much of pathetic, practical, or experimental religion in the work. The plan of the author, which led him to keep up a constant attention to speculative errors, did not admit it. Yet, there is every where so serious and grave a spirit; and now and then such displays of godliness, as shew him very capable of writing what might have been singularly useful to the Church in all ages.

He makes a strong use of the argument of tradition in support of the apostolical doctrine against the novel heresies. His acquaintance with primitive Christians justified him in pressing this argument. The force of it, in a certain degree, is obvious, though the papists have perverted his declarations in favour of their own church. But what may not men pervert and abuse? The reasonable use of tradition, as a collateral proof of Christian doctrines, is not hence invalidated. What he observes here concerning the barbarous nations is remarkable.^c—"If there were any doubt concerning the least article,—ought we not to have recourse to the most ancient churches where the apostles lived? What—if the apostles had left us no writings whatever? Ought we not to follow the tradition which they left with those to whom they committed the care of the churches? It is what several barbarous nations do, who believe in Jesus without paper or ink, having the doctrine of salvation written on their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and faithfully keeping up to ancient tradition concerning one God the Creator and his Son Jesus Christ. Those, who have received this faith without Scripture, are barbarians as to their manner of speaking, compared with us; but as to their sentiments and behaviour, they are very wise and very acceptable to God; and they persevere in the practice of justice and charity. And if any one should preach to them in their language, what the heretics have invented, they would immediately stop their ears and flee far off, and would not even hear those blasphemies."

Thus, it appears, that to the illiterate barbarians tradition, though a poor substitute, supplied the place of the written word. We may not, however, suppose that their faith was blind and implicit. Our author gives a strong testimony to their godliness; and

^a B. iv. C. 72.—Quia in nobis alit, seems equivalent to Justin's *auricularis*.

^b B. iii. C. 4.—See Fleury's Church History on the Subject of the Works of the Fathers, Vol. I. B. iv.

^c B. iv. C. 14.

those of them who were taught indeed of God would have in themselves the strongest and most reasonable of all proofs of the divinity of their religion.—This is a valuable evidence of the Holy Spirit's influences, and of the native energy of divine truth on the hearts and lives of very illiterate men.

There is no new thing under the sun :—The artifices of the Valentinians in alluring men to their communion are specimens of the wiles of heretics in all ages.—“ In public,” says Irenæus, “ they use alluring discourses, because of the common Christians, as they call those who wear the Christian name in general ; and to entice them to come often, they pretend to preach like us : and they complain that, though their doctrine be the same as ours, we abstain from their communion, and call them heretics. When they have seduced any persons from the faith by their disputes, and made them willing to comply, they then begin to open their heretical mysteries.”

He doubtless agrees with all the primitive Christians in the doctrine of the Trinity : He makes use of the forty-fifth psalm particularly to prove the Deity of Jesus Christ. He is no less clear and sound in his views of the incarnation : and, in general, notwithstanding some philosophical adulterations, he certainly maintained all the essentials of the gospel.

The use of the mystic union between the Godhead and manhood of Christ in the work of redemption ; and, in general, the doctrine of the FALL and of the RECOVERY, are scarcely held out more instructively by any writer of antiquity. The learned reader, who has a taste for what is peculiarly Christian, will not be displeased to see a few quotations.*

“ He united man to God : For if man had not overcome the adversary of man, the enemy could not, according to the plan of God's justice, have been effectually overcome.—And again, if God had not granted salvation, we should not have been put into firm possession of it ; and if man had not been united to God, he could not have been a partaker of immortality. It behoved then the Mediator between God and man, by his affinity with both, to bring both into agreement with each other.”

“ The Word of God, all-powerful and perfect in righteousness, justly set himself against the apostacy, redeeming his own property from Satan, who had borne rule over us from the beginning, and had insatiably made rapine of what was not his own ;—and this redemption was effected not by violence ; but the Lord redeemed us with his own blood, and gave his life for our life, and his flesh for our flesh, and so effected our salvation.”

He beautifully expresses our recovery in Christ. “ Our Lord would not have gathered together these things to himself ; and have saved through himself in the end what had perished in the beginning through Adam, if he had not actually been made flesh and blood. He, therefore, had flesh and blood, not of a kind different from what men have ; but he gathered into himself the very original creation of the Father, and sought that which was lost.”

Undoubtedly the intelligent scriptural reader will recollect the divine reasoning of the author to the Hebrews to be very similar to all this. And those, who see how well the views of Irenæus are supported by him, will know how to judge of the opinions of those who call this scholastic theology, will see also how accurately the primitive fathers understood and maintained the doctrines now deemed fanatical, and, lastly, will observe the propriety of being zealous for Christian peculiarities.—Another short extract shall conclude this account of the book of heresies.

“ The Word of God, Jesus Christ, on account of his immense love, became what we are, that he might make us what he is.”

Of the few fragments of this author there is nothing that seems to deserve any peculiar attention, except that of an epistle to Florinus, whom he had known in early life, and of whom he had hoped better things than those into which he was afterwards seduced. “ These doctrines,” says he, “ those who were Presbyters before us,—those who had walked with the apostles, did not deliver to you. For I saw you, when I was a boy, in the lower Asia, with Polycarp ; and you were then, though a person of rank in the emperor's service, very desirous of being approved by him. I choose rather to mention things that happened at that time than facts of a later date. The instructions of our childhood, grow with our growth, and adhere to us most closely, so that I can describe the very spot in which Polycarp sat and expounded, and his coming in and going out, and the very manner of his life, and the figure of his body, and the sermons which he preached to the multitude, and how he related to us his converse with John and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, how he mentioned their particular expressions, and what things he had heard from them of the Lord, and of his miracles and of his doctrine. As Polycarp had received from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life, he told us all things agreeable to the Scriptures. These things then, through the mercy of God visiting me, I heard with seriousness ; I wrote them not on paper, but on my heart ; and ever since, through the grace of God, I have a genuine

* R. 61. C. 15.
B. 14. 92.

* C. 6. B. v. 15.
L. 5. C. 1.

* *Αναγινωσκων*. Eph. i. 10.—See Dr. Owen's Preface to his “ *Χριστολογία*.”

* B. v. C. 14.

Book v. Preface.

remembrance of them, and I can witness before God, that if that blessed apostolical Presbyter had heard some of the doctrines which are now maintained, he would have cried out and stopped his ears, and in his usual manner have said, "O good God, to what times hast thou reserved me, that I should endure these things!" And he would immediately have fled from the place in which he had heard such doctrines."

How superficially, in this age, which calls itself enlightened, numbers are content to think on religious matters, appears from the satisfaction with which two confused lines of a certain author, great indeed as a poet, but very ill informed in religion, are constantly quoted :

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight :—
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

Proud and self-sufficient men, to whom these lines appear full of oracular wisdom, may, if they please, pronounce Irenæus a "a graceless zealot." But those in every age, to whom evangelical truth appears of real importance, will regret that so little of this zeal, "IN EARNESTLY CONTENTING FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS," discovers itself in our times :—They will regret, I say, this want of zeal, because they think it absolutely necessary to preserve practical as well as theoretical Christianity in the world.

CHAPTER II.

TERTULLIAN.

WE have not yet had any occasion to take notice of the state of Christianity in the Roman province of Africa. This whole region, once the scene of Carthaginian greatness, abounded with Christians in the second century, though of the manner of the introduction of the gospel and of the proceedings of its first planters we have no account. In the latter part of the second, and in the former part of the third century, there flourished at Carthage the famous Tertullian, the first Latin writer of the Church whose works are come down to us. Yet, were it not for some light which he throws on the state of Christianity in his own times, he would scarcely deserve to be distinctly noticed. I have seldom seen so large a collection of tracts, all professedly on Christian subjects, containing so little matter of useful instruction. The very first tract in the volume, namely, that de Pallio, shews the littleness of his views. The dress of the Roman Toga offended him : he exhorted Christians to wear the PALLIUM, a more vulgar and rustic kind of garment, and therefore more becoming their religion. All his writings betray the same sour, monastic, harsh and severe

turn of mind.—"Touch not, taste not, handle not," might seem to have been the maxims of his religious conduct. The Apostle Paul, in the chapter alluded to, warns Christians against "will-worship and voluntary humility," and shews that while the flesh outwardly appears to be humbled, it is inwardly puffed up by these things, and induced to forsake the Head, Christ Jesus. This subtle spirit of self-righteousness may, in all likelihood, in Tertullian's time, have very much overspread the African church ;—otherwise his writings would scarcely have rendered him so celebrated amongst them.

All his religious ideas seem tinged deeply with the same train of thinking : his treatise of repentance is meagre and dismal throughout ; and while it enlarges on outward things, and recommends prostration of our bodies before the priests, is very slight on the essential spirit of repentance itself.

A Christian soldier, who had refused to wear a crown of laurel which his commander had given him with the rest of his regiment, was punished for the disobedience, and was also blamed by the Christians of those times, because his conduct had a tendency to irritate needlessly the reigning powers. I am apt to think that he might have worn it as innocently as St. Paul committed himself to a ship whose sign was Castor and Pollux. It was a military ornament merely, and could no more be said to have any connection with idolatry than almost every custom of civil life must have had at that time. The Apostle, I think, would have concurred in disapproving the soldier's want of obedience to his lawful superiors : and he might have referred Christians to his own determination in the case of eating things sacrificed to idols,—"Eat of such things as they set before you, asking no questions for conscience sake." But Tertullian decides on the other side of the question, and applauds the disobedience of the soldier. His reasons are dishonourable to his understanding. He owns that there is no Scripture to be found against former compliance in this case. Tradition, he thinks, a sufficient reason for contumacy : and then he proceeds to relate some traditional customs maintained in the African churches, among which the very frequent signing of themselves with the sign of the cross is one.

Superstition had made, it seems, deep inroads into Africa. It was rather an unpollished region ;—certainly much inferior to Italy in point of civilisation. Satan's temptations are suited to tempers and situations. But surely it was not by superstitious practices that the glad tidings of salvation had been first introduced into Africa.—There must have been a deep decline.—One of the

strongest proofs that the comparative value of the Christian religion in different countries is not to be estimated by their distance from the apostolic age, is deducible from the times of Tertullian.—If my life be spared, that I may proceed with this history, we shall see Africa exhibit a much more pleasing spectacle.

All this man's cosmological determinations avow of the same asperity. He approved not of flight in persecution,—in direct contradiction to our Saviour's determination. He takes notice of a martyr named Rutillius; who, having fled several times from place to place to avoid persecution, and saved himself by money, was suddenly seized, and carried before the governor, when he thought himself secure. He adds, that he finished his martyrdom by fire, having undergone several torments.

I had much rather quote Tertullian as an historian than a reasoner.—We may make useful reflections on this fact, without concerning ourselves with the inferences of the writer.

He disapproved also,—at least after his separation from the Church,—of second marriages, and called them ADULTERY. For as he does not appear to have been much acquainted with the depravity, misery, and imbecility of human nature, most of his precepts carry rather a stoical than a Christian appearance. He was, in his own disposition, doubtless a man of great natural fortitude; and most probably of great strength of body: He lived to an advanced age.—He seems not to have had any thing of that sympathy with the weak and timid, which forms so beautiful a part of the Christian character. The Church in general was not severe enough, according to his ideas of discipline; yet, it must be confessed, they were by no means wanting in that respect. In our licentious times, when sloth and dissipation,—the very opposite extremes to those which pleased the genius of Tertullian,—abound, all, who love the ways of Christ, regret that discipline is at so low an ebb.

The Montanists, whose austerities were extreme, and whose enthusiasm was real, seduced at length our severe African; and he not only joined them, but wrote in their defence, and treated the body of Christians, from whom he separated, with much contempt.—I have the satisfaction, however, as yet to find, that the largest body of Christians so called, was the soundest.

Tertullian, we are told, resented certain treatment which he met with from some Roman Christians. But of this I know no particulars; only, that an accident of this sort is said to have influenced his secession from the Church. Error, however, is very

inconstant: He afterwards left the Montanists either entirely, or nearly so; and formed a sect of his own, called Tertullianists, who continued in Africa till Augustin's time, by whose labours their existence, as a distinct body, was brought to a close. The character of Tertullian is very strongly delineated by himself in his own writings; if there had been any thing peculiarly Christian, which he had learnt from the Montanists, his works must have shewn it: but they are all of the same uniformly sable complexion: nor does he seem to have increased in any thing but in severity.

It is but an unpleasant picture which truth has obliged me to draw of this author. One agreeable circumstance, however, attending his history is this:—It was not on account of any fundamental error in principle, that he left the Church. The faith of Christ, and the practice of real godliness existed there, beyond doubt, to a much greater degree than amongst the heretics of those times, though it be allowed and hoped, as it ought to be, that some good persons might belong to them. The abilities of Tertullian, as an orator and a scholar, are far from being contemptible; and have, doubtless, given him a reputation to which he is by no means entitled on account of his theological knowledge. Yet the man appears always serious and earnest; and, therefore, much more estimable than thousands who would take a pleasure in despising him, while they themselves are covered with profaneness. Nor is it for us, after all, to condemn a person, who certainly honoured Christ, defended several fundamental Christian doctrines, took large pains in supporting what he took to be true religion, and ever meant to serve God. He might even in his latter days, if not before, be favoured with that humbling and transforming knowledge of Christ which would fit him for the enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven.—Superstition and enthusiasm are compatible with real godliness: profaneness is not so.—It were to be wished, that those, who are most concerned in this remark, were more disposed to attend to it than they generally are.

In his treatise against Praxeas, he appears to have had very clear and sound views of the doctrine of the Trinity. He speaks of the Trinity in Unity, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, yet one God." He speaks of the Lord Jesus as both God and man, son of man and son of God, and called Jesus Christ. He speaks also of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He observes "that this rule of faith had obtained from the beginning of the gospel, antecedent to any former heretics, much more to Praxeas, who was of yesterday." To those who know the pri-

mitive times I need not say, that Tertullian's own heresy lessens not the credibility of his testimony to these things. His Montanism altered not in the least his view of the Trinity.

The heresy of Praxeas consisted in making the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all one and the same: and this notion is no other than what has since been better known by the name of Sabellianism. In this way the distinction of persons in the Godhead is denied; and no doubt the mystery of the Trinity removed; but then what becomes of the divine revelation itself?—All attempts to subvert the faith of scripture, on this subject, labour under the same error, namely, a desire to accommodate divine truths to our narrow reasoning faculties:—let men learn to submit; and on no account attempt to strip the Almighty of his attribute of Incomprehensibility! Tertullian informs us,—that Praxeas first brought this evil from Asia into the Roman world; and that he seduced many; but at last was confuted and silenced by “an instrument whom God pleased to make use of:—and the evil appeared to be eradicated.” Even Praxeas himself had the ingenuousness to retract his mistake, and his hand-writing still remains among the natural men—so Tertullian calls the Christians in general from whom he had separated; and he no more revived his heresy. Others revived it afterward, which occasioned the treatise whence I have extracted this brief account.

In his apology, the eloquence and argumentative powers of our author appear most conspicuous. He refutes, in the usual manner, the stale heathen calumnies of Christians feeding on infants. Their remarkable power over demons he states in the same manner as various of the fathers have done.—As a proof of the unity of the Godhead, he appeals to the consciences of mankind, and to a common practice, even among idolaters, founded on the supposition of ONE GOD. His description is remarkably striking.—“What God hath given,” “God sees it,”—and “I recommend to God,” and “God will restore to me:” “These,” says he, “are universal modes of speaking and of appealing to the ONE SUPREME. O testimony of the soul, naturally in favour of Christianity!—When men seriously pronounce these words, they look not to the Capitol at Rome, but to Heaven above. For the soul knows the seat of the living God, whence it had its own origin.”—I scarce remember a finer observation made by any author in favour both of the natural voice of conscience and of the patriarchal tradition of true religion; for both may fairly be supposed concerned in the support of this practice.

It shews how difficult it was for Satan to eradicate entirely every vestige of truth; and every classical reader may observe how common it is for the Pagan writers to speak of God as one, when they are most serious; and instantly to slide into the vulgar polytheism when they begin to trifle.

This apology exhibits a beautiful view of the manners and spirit of the Christians of his time; and shews what real Christianity does for men.—The following passages merit particular attention.—“We pray,” says he, “for the safety of the emperors to the eternal God, the true, the living God, whom emperors themselves would desire to be propitious to them above all others who are called gods. We, looking up to heaven, with out-stretched hands because they are harmless, with naked heads because we are not ashamed, without a prompter because we pray from the heart, constantly pray for all emperors, that they may have a long life, a secure empire, a safe palace, strong armies, a faithful senate, a well-moralized people, a quiet state of the world,—whatever Cæsar would wish for himself in his public and private capacity. I cannot solicit these things from any other than from Him from whom, I know, I shall obtain them, because he alone can do these things, and I am he who may expect them of him, being his servant, who worship him alone, and am ready to lose my life for his service. Thus then let the claws of wild beasts pierce us, or their feet trample on us, while our hands are stretched out to God; let crosses suspend us, let fires consume us, let swords pierce our breasts,—a praying Christian is in a frame for enduring any thing. How is this—ye generous rulers?—Will ye kill the good subject who supplicates God for the emperor? Were we disposed to return evil for evil, it were easy for us to revenge the injuries which we sustain. But God forbid that his people should vindicate themselves by human fire; or be reluctant to endure that by which their sincerity is evinced. Were we disposed to act the part, I will not say, of secret assassins, but of open enemies, should we want forces and numbers? Are there not multitudes of us in every part of the world? It is true we are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all your towns, cities, islands, castles, boroughs, counsels, camps, courts, palaces, senate, forum:—WE LEAVE YOU ONLY YOUR TEMPLES.—For what war should we not be ready and well prepared, even though unequal in numbers; we,—who die with so much pleasure, were it not that our religion requires us rather to suffer death than to inflict it?—If we were to make a general secession from your dominions, you would be astonished at your solitude.—We are dead to all ideas of worldly honour and dignity: Nothing is more foreign to us than

* A modest periphrasis, I apprehend, of Tertullian himself.



political concerns : The whole world is our republic.—We are a body united in one bond of religion, discipline, and hope. We meet in our assemblies for prayer. We are compelled to have recourse to the divine oracles for caution and recollection on all occasions. We nourish our faith by the word of God, we erect our hope, we fix our confidence, we strengthen our discipline by repeatedly inculcating precepts, exhortations, corrections, and by excommunication, when it is needful. This last, as being in the sight of God, is of great weight; and is a serious warning of the future judgment, if any one behave in so scandalous a manner as to be debarred from holy communion. Those, who preside among us, are elderly persons, not distinguished for opulence, but worthiness of character. Every one pays something into the public chest once a month, or when he pleases, and according to his ability and inclination; for there is no compulsion.

These gifts are, as it were, the deposits of piety. Hence we relieve and bury the needy, support orphans and decrepid persons, those who have suffered shipwreck, and those who, for the word of God, are condemned to the mines, or imprisonment. This very charity of ours has caused us to be noticed by some;—See, say they, how they love one another."

He afterwards takes notice of the extreme readiness with which Christians paid the taxes to the existing government, in opposition to the spirit of fraud and deceit, with which so many acted in these matters. But I must not enlarge;—the reader may form an idea of the purity, integrity, heavenly-mindedness, and passiveness under injuries, for which the first Christians were so justly renowned. The effect of that glorious effusion of the divine Spirit was the production of this meek and charitable conduct in external things : Every evidence that can be desired is given to evince the truth of this relation :—The "confession of enemies unites here with the relations of friends.

I shall close the account of Tertullian with a few facts taken from his address to Scapula, the persecuting governor, without any remarks.

"Claudius Herminianus, in Cappadocia, was vexed because his wife was become a servant of Christ, and for that reason he treated the Christians cruelly.—Being eaten with worms, "Let no one," says he, "know it, lest the Christians rejoice." Afterward, convinced of his error in having, by force of torments, caused persons to abjure Christianity, he died almost a Christian himself.

At Thistrum Cincius Severus himself taught Christians how to answer so as to obtain their dismissal.

Asper, having moderately tortured a per-

son and brought him to submit, would not compel him to sacrifice; and he made a public declaration among the advocates, "that he was grieved that he had had any thing to do with such a cause."

The emperor Severus himself was, in one part of his life, kind to the Christians. Proculus, a Christian, had cured him of a disorder by the use of a certain oil; and he kept him in his palace to his death. This man was well known to Caracalla, the successor of Severus, whose nurse was a Christian. Even some persons of the highest quality, of both sexes, were openly commended and protected by Severus against the raging populace.

Arrius Antoninus, in Asia, persecuted so vehemently, that all the Christians of the state presented themselves in a body: He ordered a few of them to be put to death, and dismissed the rest, saying, "If you wish to die, wretched men, ye may find precipices and halters."

CHAPTER III.

PANTÆNUS.

ONE of the most respectable cities within the precincts of the Roman empire was Alexandria, the metropolis of Egypt. Here the gospel had been planted by St. Mark; and, from the considerable success which had attended it in most capital towns, it is probable that many persons were converted. But of the first pastors of this Church, and of the work of God among them, we have no account. Our more distinct information begins with what is evil. The Platonic philosophers ruled the taste of this city, which piqued itself on its superior erudition. Ammonius Saccas had, as we have seen, reduced there the notions of the learned into a system, which pretended to embrace all sorts of sentiments; and his successors, for several ages, followed his plan. We are told, that from St. Mark's time, a Christian catechetical school was supported in Alexandria. Whether it be so or not, Pantænus is the first master of it of whom we have any account. It should seem from a passage of Eusebius,* that he was an Hebrew by descent. By tradition he had received the true doctrine from Peter, James, John, and Paul; and, no doubt, he deserved this testimony of Eusebius, notwithstanding the unhappy mixture of philosophy which he imbibed in this region. For Pantænus was much addicted to the sect of the Stoics, a sort of romantic pretenders to perfection, which doctrine flattered human pride, but was, surely, ill

* See the foregoing account of Peregrinus, page 87.

† B. v. C. 10.

adapted to our natural imbecility and to scriptural views of innate depravity. The combination of Stoicism with Christianity in the system of Pantanus must have very much debased the sacred truths; and we may be assured that those who were disposed to follow implicitly the dictates of such an instructor, must have been furnished by him with a clouded light of the gospel;—still, it is not improbable but that many of the simple and illiterate Christians might happily escape the infection, and preserve, unadulterated, the genuine simplicity of the faith of Christ:—The bait of reasoning pride lies more in the way of the learned; and, in all ages, they are more prone to be caught by it.

Pantanus always retained the title of the Stoic philosopher, after he had been admitted to eminent employments in the Christian church.* For ten years he laboriously discharged the office of Catechist, and freely taught all that desired him: whereas the school of his predecessors had been more private.

Certain Indian ambassadors,—it is not easy to determine from what part of India they came,—intreated Demetrius, then bishop of Alexandria, to send them some worthy person to preach the faith of Jesus in their country. Pantanus was chosen; and the hardships he must have endured were, doubtless, great. But there were at that time many Evangelists, who had the apostolical spirit to propagate the faith at the hazard of their lives. And, as Pantanus very freely complied with this call, we have here one of the best proofs of his being possessed of the spirit of the gospel. His labours among ignorant Indians, where neither fame, nor ease, nor profit were attainable, appear to me much more substantial proofs of his godliness, than any which can be drawn from his catechetical employments at Alexandria. The former would oblige him to attend chiefly to Christian fundamentals, and could afford little opportunity of indulging the philosophic spirit. We are told he found in India the gospel of St. Matthew, which had been carried thither by the Apostle Bartholomew, who had first preached amongst them.—I mention this, but much doubt the truth of it.—Of the particular success of his labours we have no account: He lived to return to Alexandria, and resumed his catechetical office. He died not long after the commencement of the third century. He wrote but little: Some Commentaries on the Scriptures are all that are mentioned as his, and of them not a fragment remains.

Candour, I think, requires us to look on him as a sincere Christian,—whose fruitfulness was yet much checked by that very philosophy for which Eusebius so highly com-

mends him.—A blasting wind it surely was; but it did not entirely destroy Christian vegetation in all whom it infected.—Let us now turn our eyes to his disciple, from whom we may collect more clearly what the Master was, because we have more evidence concerning him.—But the Christian reader must be prepared to expect a declension in divine things, in the state of the Church before us.

CHAPTER IV.

CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS.

HE was, by his own confession, a scholar of Pantanus, and of the same philosophical cast of mind. He was of the eclectic sect. It is sincerely to be regretted that Clemens had any acquaintance with them: for so far as he mixed their notions with Christianity, so far he tarnished it: and though we may admit, that by his zeal, activity, learning, and reputation, he did good to many in instructing and inducing them to receive the fundamentals of the divine religion, it is nevertheless not to be denied that he clouded the pure light of the gospel:—Let us hear himself: “I espouse neither this nor that philosophy, neither the Stoic, nor the Platonic, nor the Epicurean, nor that of Aristotle; but whatever any of these sects hath said, that is fit and just; whatever teaches righteousness with a divine and religious knowledge, all this I select; and call it philosophy.”

Is it not hence very evident, that from the time that this philosophizing spirit had entered into the Church through Justin, it had procured to itself a respect to which its march no way entitled it? For what is there even of good ethics in all the philosophers, which Clement might not have learnt in the New Testament; and much more perfectly, and without the danger of pernicious adulterations? Doubtless many valuable purposes are answered by an acquaintance with these writers;—but to dictate to us in religion, Clement should have known, was no part of THEIR business.—“The world by wisdom knew not God;”—“Beware of philosophy.” The Christian world was now gradually learning to neglect these Scriptural cautions, and divine knowledge is certainly much too high a term for any human doctrine whatever.

He succeeded his master Pantanus in the catechetical school, and under him were bred the famous Origen, Alexander bishop of Jerusalem, and other eminent men. I read the following passage of Clemens with no pleasure,—“As the husbandman first waters

* Cave's Life of Pantanus.

4 Euseb. B. v. C. 9.

• Strom. L. I. See Cave's Life of Clemens.

the soil, and then casts in his seed, so the notions which I derive out of the writings of the Gentiles serve first to water and soften the earthy parts of the soul, that the spiritual seed may be the better cast in, and take vital root in the minds of men."

This, certainly, is not a Christian dialect: The Apostles neither placed gentile philosophy in the foundation, nor believed that it would at all assist in raising the superstructure of Christianity. On the contrary, they looked on the philosophical religion of their own times as so much rubbish; but, in all ages, the blandishments of mere reason on such subjects deceive us;—"VAIN MAN WOULD BE WISE."

Besides his employments in the office of Catechist, he was made Presbyter in the Church of Alexandria. During the persecution under Severus most probably, he visited the East and had a peculiar intimacy with Alexander bishop of Jerusalem, who seems to have been a holy man. This last suffered imprisonment for the faith; and in that situation he wrote a letter to the Church of Antioch, which was conveyed by Clemens. Something of the spirit of Christianity appears in the fragment of this letter. "Alexander, a servant of God, and a prisoner of Jesus Christ, to the blessed Church at Antioch, in the Lord, greeting. Our Lord has made my bonds, in this time of my imprisonment, light and easy to me; while I understood that Asclepiades, a person admirably qualified by his eminency in the faith, was, by divine providence, become bishop of your holy Church of Antioch. These letters, brethren, I have sent you by Clemens the blessed Presbyter, a man of approved integrity, whom ye both do know already and shall still farther know: He hath been here with us according to the good will of God, and hath much established and augmented the Church of Christ." From Jerusalem Clemens went to Antioch, and afterwards returned to his charge at Alexandria.—The time of his death is uncertain.

The mystic philosophy, to which he was so much addicted, would naturally darken his views of some of the most precious truths of the gospel. In particular, the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ will always suffer from a connexion of this kind: Human philosophical doctrines admit no righteousness but what is a man's own.—There is, however, notwithstanding, good proof of the solid piety of this learned man. Little is known of his life; but his religious taste and spirit may be collected from his writings.

His exhortations^f to the gentiles is a discourse written to convert the Pagans from their religion, and persuade them to embrace

that of Jesus Christ. In the beginning of it he shews what a difference there is between the design of Jesus Christ, and that of Orpheus, and of those ancient musicians who were the authors of idolatry. "These captivated men by the sweetness of their music, with a view of rendering them miserable slaves to idols; and of making them like the very beasts, the stocks, the stones, which they adored;—whereas Jesus Christ, who, from all eternity, was the Word of God, always had a compassionate tenderness for men, and at last took their nature upon him, to free them from the slavery of Demons, to open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, to guide their paths in the way of righteousness, to deliver them from death and hell, and to bestow on them everlasting life, and to put them into a capacity of living a heavenly life here upon earth; and, lastly, God made himself man to teach man to be like unto God." He shews them, that eternal salvation cannot otherwise be expected, and that eternal torments cannot otherwise be avoided, than by believing in Jesus Christ, and by living conformably to his laws. "If you were permitted," says he, "to purchase eternal salvation, what would you not give for it? And now you may obtain it by faith and love;—there is nothing can hinder you from acquiring it;—neither poverty, nor misery, nor old age, nor any state of life. Believe, therefore, in one God, who is God and man, and receive eternal salvation for a recompense.—Seek God, and you shall live for ever."

The candid Christian sees that the fundamentals of the gospel are actually here, though not laid down in the clearest and happiest manner. "In his *Pædagogus* he describes the WORD INCARNATE as the instructor of men; and says, "that he performs his functions by forgiving our sins as he is God, and by instructing us he is as man, with great sweetness and love:—He equally instructs all sorts, because, in one sense, all are children: yet we must not look on Christian doctrines as childish and contemptible; on the contrary, the quality of CHILDREN, which we receive in baptism^a—or regeneration,—renders us perfect in the knowledge of divine things, by delivering us from sins through grace, and by enlightening us with the illumination of faith; so that we are at the same time both children and men: and the milk with which we are nourished, being both the word and will of God, is very solid and substantial nourishment." These appear to be some of his best ideas of Christianity.

^a Du Pin.

^b The outward sign and the inward spiritual grace, on account of their usual connexion in the primitive church, are used as synonymous by a number of primitive writers, which has, unhappily, given occasion to one of the worst abuses, by those who place all grace in form and ceremony only.

^f Dupin Clement.

In his *Stromata* he speaks with his usual partiality in favour of philosophy, and shews the effect his regard for it had on his own mind, by saying that faith is God's gift, but so as to depend on our own free-will. His account of the perfect Christian, whom he calls Gnosticus, is sullied by stoical rhapsodies.—“He is never angry, and nothing affects him; because he always loves God: He looks upon that time as lost which he is obliged to spend in receiving nourishment: He is employed in continual and mental prayer. He is mild, affable, patient, but at the same time so rigid as not to be tempted; He gives way neither to pleasure nor to pain.”—But enough of these views: Pseudo-religionists have since his time dealt largely in such reveries, so inconsistent with that humbling sense of imbecility, and that sincere conflict against the sin of our nature, which is peculiarly Christian. In truth—if his knowledge of Christian doctrine was really defective, the defect lay in the point of original sin. Of this his philosophical sect knew nothing aright; and it must be owned he speaks of it in a very confused, if not in a contradictory manner. On the whole,—such is the baneful effect of mixing things which will not incorporate,—human inventions with Christian truths,—that this writer, learned, laborious, and ingenious as he was, may seem to be far exceeded by many obscure and illiterate persons at this day, in true Scriptural knowledge and in the experience of divine things.—That he was, in the main, a truly pious person, neither makes this account less credible, nor the danger less of admitting the pestilent spirit of human self-sufficiency to dictate in the Christian religion.

CHAPTER V.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH DURING THE REIGNS OF SEVERUS AND CARACALLA.

It seemed proper to prefix to the general history of the third century, the lives of the four persons, which we have reviewed; partly because they were studious men not very much connected with the public state of Christianity; and partly because the knowledge of their views and taste in religion may prepare the reader to expect that unhappy mixture of philosophical self-righteousness and superstition, which much clouded and depraved the pure light of the gospel in this century.

Severus, though in his younger days a bitter persecutor of Christians at Lyons, was yet, through the influence of the kind-

ness which he had received from Proculus, favourably disposed toward the Christians for a considerable time. It was not till about the tenth year of his reign, which falls in with the year two hundred and two, that his native ferocity of temper brake out afresh, and kindled a very severe persecution against the Christians. He was just returned from the East victorious; and the pride of prosperity induced him to forbid the propagation of the gospel. Christians still thought it right to obey God rather than man. Severus persisted; and exercised the usual cruelties. The persecution raged every where; but particularly at Alexandria. From various parts of Egypt the Christians were brought thither to suffer; and they expired in torments. Leonidas, father of the famous Origen, was allowed to be beheaded: His son was then very young; but the account which is given of him by Eusebius,² deserves our notice.

Lætus was at that time governor of Alexandria and of the rest of Egypt; and Demetrius had been recently elected bishop of the Christians in that city. Great numbers now suffering martyrdom, young Origen panted for the honour, and needlessly exposed himself to danger. His mother checked the imprudent zeal at first by earnest entreaties; but perceiving that he still was bent on suffering with his father, who at that time was closely confined, she very properly exercised her motherly authority by confining him to the house, and by hiding from him all his apparel. The vehement spirit of Origen prompted him, when he could do nothing else, to write a letter to his father, in which he thus exhorted him, “Father, faint not, and don't be concerned on our account.” He had been carefully trained in the study of the Scriptures under the inspection of his pious father, who, together with the study of the liberal arts, had particularly superintended this most important part of education. Before he introduced his son to any material exercises in profane learning, he instructed him in the Scriptures, and gave him daily a certain task out of them to repeat. The penetrating genius of Origen led him, in the course of his employment, to investigate the sense of Scripture, and to ask his father questions beyond his ability to solve. The father checked his curiosity, reminded him of his imbecility, and admonished him to be content with the plain grammatical sense of Scripture, which obviously offered itself;—but, inwardly rejoiced, it seems, that God had given him such a son. And it would not have been amiss, if he had rejoiced with TREMBLING;—perhaps he did so; and Origen's early loss of such a father, who, probably, was more simple in Christian faith and

¹ Fleury, B. iv

² Euseb. B. vi. C. 1.

piety than he himself ever was, might be an extreme disadvantage to him. Youths of great and uncommon parts, accompanied, as is generally the case, with much ambition and boundless curiosity, have often been the instruments of Satan in perverting divine truth: and it is not so much attended to as it ought to be by many truly pious and humble souls, that the superior eminence, in parts and good sense, of young persons whom they love and respect, is by no means a prognostic of the like superiority in real spiritual knowledge and the discernment of divine things. Men of genius, if they meet with encouragement, will be sure to distinguish themselves in whatever line of life they move. But men of genius and even of very remarkable endowments, though sincere in Christianity, may, not only in the practice, but even in the perception of gospel-truths, be far outstripped by others who are naturally much their inferiors; because the latter are by no means so exposed to the crafts of Satan, are not so liable in their judgments to be warped from Christian simplicity, are more apt to look for understanding from above, and are less disposed to lean to an arm of flesh.

We seem to discover, in the very beginning of Origen, the foundation of that presumptuous spirit which led him afterwards to philosophize so dangerously in the Christian religion, and never to content himself with plain truth, but to hunt after something singular and extraordinary;—though it must be acknowledged his sincere desire of serving God appeared from early life; nor does it ever seem to have forsaken him, so that he may be considered as having been a child of God from early years.

His father dying a martyr, he was left, with his mother and other six children, an orphan aged seventeen years. His father's substance was confiscated by the emperor, and the family reduced to great distress. But providence gave him a friend in a rich and godly matron, who yet supported in her house a certain person of Antioch, who was noted for heresy. We cannot at this distance of time assign her motives; but Origen, though obliged to be in the company of the heretic, could not be prevailed on to join in prayer with him. He now vigorously applied himself to the improvement of his understanding; and having no more work at school,—it seems, because he soon acquired all the learning his master could give him,—and finding that the business of catechizing was deserted at Alexandria because of the persecution, he undertook the work himself; and several gentiles came to hear him and became his disciples. He was now in the eighteenth year of his age; and in the heat of the persecution he distinguished himself by his attachment to the martyrs, not only

to those of his acquaintance, but in general to all who suffered for Christianity. He visited such of them as were fettered in deep dungeons and close imprisonment; and was present with them even after their condemnation, and boldly attended them to the place of execution: he openly embraced and saluted them; and was, once, in imminent danger of being stoned to death on this account. Indeed he was repeatedly in peril of his life; for the persecution daily prevailed; and he could no longer pass safely through the streets of Alexandria. He often changed his lodgings, but was every where pursued; and, humanly speaking, it seemed impossible for him to escape. His instructions, however, and his zeal produced great effects: multitudes crowded to hear him; and were by his labours incited to attend to Christianity.

The charge of the school was now, by Demetrius the bishop, committed to him alone; and he converted it wholly into a school of religious information: He maintained himself by the sale of the profane books which he had been wont to study. Thus he lived many years, an amazing monument, at once both of industry and of self-denial. Not only the day, but the greater part of the night was by him devoted to religious study; and he practised, with literal conscientiousness, our Lord's rules of not having two coats, nor two pairs of shoes, and of not providing for futurity. He was inured to cold, nakedness, and poverty: He offended many by his unwillingness to receive their gratuities: He abstained from wine; and, in general, lived so abstemiously, as to endanger his life. Many persons imitated his excessive austerities: and were, at that time, honoured with the name of philosophers; and some of them patiently suffered martyrdom.

I state facts as I find them.—A strong spirit of self-righteousness, meeting with a secret ambition, too subtle to be perceived by him who is the dupe of it, and supported by a natural fortitude of mind and by the active exertion of great talents, hath enabled many in external things to seem superior in piety to men of real humility and self-diffidence, who penetrating more happily into the genius of the gospel, by the exercise of faith in the Son of God and that genuine charity which is its fruit, are led into a course of conduct less dazzling indeed, but much more agreeable to the gospel. One cannot form a high idea of the solid judgment of these Alexandrian converts. Were there none of the elder and more experienced Christians in that city, who were capable, with meekness of wisdom, of correcting the exuberances of this zealous youth, and of shewing him that, by such a refusal of the comforts of life, he affected a superiority to

Paul himself, who gratefully received the sins of the Philippians?—Excesses of this sort must have been attended with great defects in inward vital godliness: The reader is again referred to the second chapter of the epistle to the Colossians for a comment on the conduct of Origen. How much better had it been for him to have continued a scholar for some time longer; and not to have feasted the pride of the human heart by appointing him a teacher!—But the lively flow of genius seems to have been mistaken for great growth in Christian knowledge and piety.

One of his scholars, called Plutarch, was led to martyrdom. Origen accompanied him to the place of execution. The odium of the scholar's sufferings reflected on the master; and it was not without a peculiar providence that he escaped the vengeance of the citizens. After him Serenus suffered by fire: the third martyr was Heraclides; the fourth Heron. The former had not yet been baptized, being only what was called a Catechumen; the latter had been lately baptized; but both were beheaded. A second Serenus of the same school, having sustained great torments and much pain, was beheaded. A woman also, called Rais, as yet a Catechumen, suffered death. Potamiana, a young woman remarkable for beauty, purity of mind, and firmness in the faith of Christ, suffered very dreadful torments: She was scourged very severely by the order of Aquila the judge, who threatened to deliver her to be abused by the basest characters. But she remained firm in the faith; was led to the fire, and burned together with her mother Marcella. The heart of Basilides, a soldier, who presided at her execution, was softened. He pitied her, treated her courteously, and protected her, so far as he durst, from the insolence of the mob. She acknowledged his kindness, thanked him, and promised that after her departure she would entreat the Lord for him. Scalding pitch was poured on her whole body, which she sustained in much patience. Some time after Basilides, being required by his fellow-soldiers to swear profanely on a certain occasion, he refused, and confessed himself a Christian. They disbelieved him at first; but finding him serious, they carried him before the judge, who remanded him to prison. The Christians visited him; and upon being questioned as to the cause of his sudden change, he declared that Potamiana, three days after her martyrdom, had appeared to him by night, and informed him that she had performed her promise; and that he should shortly die.—After this he suffered martyrdom.

The reader will think this an extraordinary story: It is tinged with superstition, no

doubt; but who can venture, without manifesting the imputation of temerity, to reject it altogether as a fiction. Eusebius lived at no great distance from the time of Origen: He had made accurate inquiries after him and his followers in Alexandria; and he observes that the fame of Potamiana was in his own time very great in that province. Her martyrdom and that of the soldier seem sufficiently authentic. Her promise to pray for him after her departure only shews the gradual prevalence of fanatical philosophy, will-worship, and the like; and if the reader be not prepared by a sufficient degree of candour to admit the truth of authentic narratives and the reality of converting grants, because pitifully stained, in many instances, with such superstition, he will find little satisfaction in the evidences of Christian piety for many ages. But we are slaves to habit. In our own time we make great allowances in Christians for the love of the world: we are not so easily disposed to make allowances for superstitions. Yet many wrong sentiments and views may be found where the heart is devoted, in faith and love, to God and his Christ. It will still be objected that God would not satisfy superstitions of this sort by causing supernaturally the deceased spirit of a martyr to appear to Basilides.—I answer,—the supposition of a dream removes all the difficulty; and the more easily, when we recollect that the man's mind could not fail to have been previously under a strong impression of the person of the sufferer, of her late martyrdom, and of the circumstances which attended it.

A peculiar resolution made and put into execution about this time by Origen illustrates his character in the strongest manner. Though disposed beyond most men to allegorize the Scriptures, in one passage he followed their literal sense too closely, "There are some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake."¹ We need not be at a loss for his motives. He was much conversant among women as a catechizer and an expounder of the Scriptures;—and, no doubt, he was desirous of removing occasions for the slanders of infidels, as well as temptations from himself.—However he took all possible pains to conceal the fact.

One cannot but be astonished in noticing how strong the self-righteous maxims and views were grown in the Church;—yet still,—piety of principle, combined with fervour of zeal, must be revered by every one, who is not lost to all sense of goodness.—The extraordinary step taken by Origen, above alluded to, could not remain a secret. Demetrius his bishop, at first encouraged and

¹ Matthew xix. 12.

commended him : afterward," through the power of envy, on account of his growing popularity, he published the fact abroad with a view to asperse him. However, the bishops of Cæsarea and Jerusalem protected and supported him, and ordained him a presbyter in the Church. Day and night he continued still to labour at Alexandria.—But it is time to turn from Alexandria to other parts of the Roman empire; and to see what effects were produced by this same persecution of Severus.

Alexander, a bishop in Cappadocia, confessed the faith of Christ, and sustained a variety of sufferings; and yet by the providence of God was at length delivered:—and he travelled afterwards to Jerusalem. There he was joyfully received by Narcissus the very aged bishop of that See, a man of extraordinary piety, who associated Alexander with him in the labours of Christian instruction. Some epistles of the latter were extant in Eusebius's time, who gives us a short fragment of one of them, sufficiently authenticating the fact,—that those two holy men were joint pastors of Jerusalem.

"Narcissus greets you, who governed this bishopric before me; and now being an hundred and sixteen years old, prayeth with me, and that very seriously, for the state of the Church, and beseeches you to be of one mind with me."

If the ancient martyrologists had been preserved uncorrupted, they would afford us useful materials, and illustrate much the spirit and genius of real Christianity in its primitive professors. But frauds, interpolations, and impostures, are endless: The papal and monastic superstitions, in after-ages, induced their supporters to corrupt these martyrologists, and indeed the writings of the fathers in general. The difficulty of procuring materials for a well-connected credible history of real Christians is, hence, increased exceedingly. What I cannot believe, I shall not take the trouble to transcribe; what I can, where the matter appears worthy of memory, shall be exhibited. This is the case of the martyrs of Scillita, a city of Africa, in the province of Carthage. The narration is simple, credible throughout, and worthy of the purest ages of the gospel.—The facts belong to the times of Severus.

"Twelve persons were brought before Saturninus the proconsul at Carthage, the chief of whom were Speratus, Narzal, and Cittin, and three women, Donata, Secunda, and Vestina. When they came before him, he said to them all, "You may expect the emperor our master's pardon, if you return to your senses, and observe the ceremonies of our gods." To which Speratus replied, "We have never been guilty of any thing that is evil, nor been partakers of injustice :

We have even prayed for those who persecute us unjustly; in which we obey our EMPEROR, who prescribed to us this rule of behaviour." Saturninus answered, "We have also a religion that is simple: We swear by the genius of the emperors, and we offer up vows for their health, which you ought also to do." Speratus answered, "If you will hear me patiently, I will declare unto you the mystery of Christian simplicity." The proconsul said, "Shall I hear you speak ill of our ceremonies? Rather swear, all of you, by the genius of the emperors our masters, that you may enjoy the pleasures of life." Speratus answered, "I know not the genius of the emperors. I serve God, who is in heaven, whom no man hath seen, nor can see. I have never been guilty of any crime punishable by the public laws: if I buy any thing, I pay the duties to the collectors: I acknowledge my God and Saviour to be the Supreme Governor of all nations: I have made no complaints against any person; and therefore they ought to make none against me." The proconsul turning to the rest said, "Do not ye imitate the folly of this mad wretch; but rather fear our prince and obey his commands." Cittin answered, "We fear only the Lord our God, who is in heaven." The proconsul then said,—“Let them be carried to prison, and put in fetters till to-morrow.”

The next day the proconsul, seated on his tribunal, caused them to be brought before him, and said to the women,—“Honour our prince, and do sacrifice to the gods.” Donata replied, “We honour Cæsar as Cæsar; but to God we offer prayer and worship.” Vestina said, “I also am a Christian.” Secunda said, “I also believe in my God, and will continue steadfast to him; and, in regard to your gods, we will not serve and adore them.” The proconsul ordered them to be separated; then, having called for the men, he said to Speratus, “Perseverest thou in being a Christian.” Speratus answered, “Yes, I do persevere;—Let all give ear, I am a Christian;” which being heard by the rest, they said, “We also are Christians.” The proconsul said, “You will neither consider your danger nor receive mercy.” They replied, “Do what you please, we shall die joyfully for the sake of Jesus Christ.” The proconsul asked, “What books are those which you read and revere?” Speratus replied, “The four gospels of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; the epistles of the Apostle St. Paul, and all the Scripture that is inspired of God.” The proconsul said, “I will give you three days to reflect and to come to yourselves.” Upon which Speratus answered, “I am a Christian, and such are all those who are with me: and we will never quit the faith of our Lord Jesus. Do, therefore, what you think fit.”

The proconsul seeing their resolution, pronounced sentence against them,—that they should die by the hands of the executioner, in these terms:—"Speratus and the rest, having acknowledged themselves to be Christians, and having refused to pay due honour to the emperor, I command their heads to be cut off." This sentence having been read, Speratus and his fellow-sufferers said, "We give thanks to God, who honoureth us this day with being received as martyrs in heaven, for confessing his name." They were carried to the place of punishment, where they fell on their knees all together, and having again given thanks to Jesus Christ, they were beheaded.*

° At Carthage itself four young Catechumens were seized, Revocatus and Felicitas,—alaves to the same master,—with Saturninus and Secundulus, and also Vivia Perpetua, a lady of quality. She had a father, a mother, and two brothers, of whom one was a Catechumen: she was about twenty-two years of age; was married, and was then pregnant; and moreover, she had a young child at her breast. To these five, by an excess of zeal too common at that time, Saturninus voluntarily joined himself. While they were in the hands of the persecutors, the father of Perpetua, himself a Pagan but full of affection to his favourite offspring, importuned her to fall from the faith. His intreaties were vain. Her pious constancy appeared to him an absurd obstinacy, and enraged him so much as to induce him to give her very rough treatment. For a few days while these catechumens were under guard, but not confined in the prison, they found means to be baptized; and Perpetua's prayers were directed particularly for patience under bodily pains. They were then put into a dark prison. To the rest, who had been more accustomed to hardships, this change of scene had not any thing in it very terrible. To her, who had experienced nothing but the delicacies of genteel life, it was peculiarly formidable and distressing: Her concern for her infant was extreme.—Tertius and Pomponius, two deacons of the Church, obtained by money, that the prisoners might go out of the dark dungeon, and for some hours refresh themselves in a more commodious place, where Perpetua gave the breast to her infant, and then recommended him carefully to her mother. For some time her mind was oppressed with concern for the misery she had brought on her family; though it was for the sake of a good conscience; but she grew more composed, and her prison became a palace.

Her father, some time after, came to the prison overwhelmed with grief; which, in all probability, was augmented by the reflec-

tions he had made on his own rough and angry behaviour to her at their last interview. "Have pity, my daughter," says he, "on my grey hairs; have pity on your father, if I was ever worthy of that name: if I myself have brought you up to this age; if I have preferred you to all your brethren, make me not a reproach to mankind: respect your father and your aunt—these, it seems, were joined in the interests of paganism, while the mother appears to have been a Christian, otherwise his silence concerning her seems scarcely to be accounted for;—have compassion on your son, who cannot survive you: lay aside your obstinacy, lest you destroy us all: for if you perish, we must all of us shut our mouths in disgrace." The old gentleman, with much tenderness, kissed her hands, threw himself at her feet, weeping and calling her no longer his daughter, but his mistress—the mistress of his fate! He was the only person of the family who did not rejoice at her martyrdom. Perpetua, though inwardly torn with filial affection, could offer him no other comfort than to desire him to acquiesce in the divine disposal.

The next day they were all brought into the court, and examined in the presence of vast crowds. There the unhappy old gentleman appeared with his little grandson, and taking Perpetua aside, conjured her to have some pity on her child. The procurator, Hilarian, joined in the suit, but in vain. The old man then attempted to draw his daughter from the scaffold. Hilarian ordered him to be beaten; and a blow, which he received with a staff, was felt by Perpetua very severely.

Hilarian condemned them to be exposed to the wild beasts. They then returned cheerfully to their prison. Perpetua sent the deacon, Pomponius, to demand her child of her father, which he refused to return. The health of the child, we are told, suffered not; nor did Perpetua feel any bodily inconvenience.

Secundulus died in prison. Felicitas was eight months gone with child; and seeing the day of the public shews to be near, she was much afflicted, lest her execution should take place before her delivery. Her companions joined in prayer for her three days before the spectacles; and she was, with great difficulty, delivered of a child. One of the door-keepers, who, perhaps, expected to have found in her a stoical insensibility, and heard her cries, said, "Do you complain of this? what will you do when you are exposed to the beasts?" Felicitas answered, with a sagacity truly Christian, "It is I that suffer now, but then there will be another with me, that will suffer for me, because I shall suffer for his sake."—Her new-born daughter was delivered to a Christian woman, who nursed it as her own.

* Fleury, B. v. p. 77.

• Acta sincera, p. 36

The tribune appears to have credited a report, that the prisoners would free themselves by magical practices; and, in consequence, to have treated them roughly: "Why don't you," says Perpetua, "give us some relief? Will it not be for your honour that we should appear well fed at the spectacles?"

This address of hers had the desired effect: It procured a very agreeable alteration in their treatment. On the day before the shows they were supplied with their last meal; and the martyrs did their utmost to convert it into an *agape*: they ate in public: their brethren and others were allowed to visit them; and the keeper of the prison himself, by this time, was converted to the faith: they talked to the people, and warned them to flee from the wrath to come: they pointed out to them their own happy lot, and smiled at the curiosity of those who ran to see them. "Observe well our faces," cries Satur, with much animation, "that ye may know them at the day of judgment."

The Spirit of God was much with them on the day of trial: joy, rather than fear was painted on their looks. Perpetua, cherished by Jesus Christ, went on with a composed countenance and an easy pace, holding down her eyes, lest the spectators might draw wrong conclusions from their vivacity. Some idolatrous garments were offered them by the Pagans: "We sacrifice our lives," said they, "to avoid every thing of this kind."—The tribune desisted from his demand.

Perpetua sang, as already victorious: and Revocatus, Saturninus, and Satur, endeavoured to affect the people with the fear of the wrath to come. Being come into Hilarian's presence, "Thou judgest us," said they, "and God shall judge thee." The mob was enraged, and insisted on their being scourged before they were exposed to the beasts. It was done, and the martyrs rejoiced in being conformed to their Saviour's sufferings.

Perpetua and Felicitas were stripped, and put into the nets, and exposed to a wild cow. The spectators were shocked at the sight: for the one was an accomplished beauty, and the other had been newly delivered of a child.—The assisting executioner drew them back and covered them with loose garments. Perpetua was first attacked; and falling backwards she put herself into a reclining posture; and seeing her habit torn by her side, she retired to cover herself: she then gathered up her hair, that she might seem less disordered: she raised herself up, and seeing Felicitas bruised, she gave her her hand and lifted her up: then they went toward the gate, where Perpetua was received by a catamen called Rusticus, who attended her. "I wonder," said she, "when they will expose us to the cow:"—She had been, it

seems, insensible of what had passed, nor could believe it till she saw on her body and clothes the marks of her sufferings. She caused her brother to be called, and addressing herself to him and Rusticus, she said, "Continue firm in the faith; love one another; and be neither frightened nor offended at our sufferings."

The people insisted on having the martyrs brought into the midst of the amphitheatre, that they might have the pleasure of seeing them die: some of them rose up and went forward of their own accord, after having given one another the kiss of charity: others received the last blow without speaking or stirring. Perpetua fell into the hands of an unskilful gladiator, who pierced her between the ribs so as to give her much unnecessary pain. She cried out; and then she herself guided his trembling hand to her throat:—and thus with the rest she slept in Jesus.

Augustine, in his exposition of the forty-seventh psalm, takes notice of the victorious strength of divine love prevailing over all natural affections, and produces this same Perpetua as an example.¹—"We know and read thus in the sufferings of the blessed Perpetua."—He mentions the same story also in three other places in his treatise of the soul.² But it is evident that he doubts whether Perpetua herself wrote what is ascribed to her. If so, we may well doubt; and more than doubt the truth of the visions with which this excellent narrative has been intermixed; and with which I have not thought it worth while to trouble the reader. Yet the general history has every mark of authenticity.—Augustine himself published three sermons on the anniversary of the martyrs. It is much to be regretted that the finest monuments of ecclesiastical antiquity have been thus tarnished by mixtures of fraud or superstition.—The authority of Augustine has enabled me to distinguish with some degree of precision the truth from the falsehood. My business does not call me to recite the frauds; and it will be needless to add further remarks: the pious reader sees, with pleasure, that God was yet present with his people.—Indeed the power of God appeared evidently displayed during the course of this dreadful persecution, by the sudden and amazing conversions of several persons who voluntarily suffered death for that doctrine which they before detested. Of this we have the very respectable testimony of Origen, who, whatever other defects he be justly charged with, is certainly allowed to be of unquestionable veracity.³

Severus would naturally extend this persecution to Gaul, the scene of his former cruelties. In fact, it was now that Irenæus

¹ Tom. v. iii.

² L. I. C. 10. L. 3. C. 9, L. 4. 18. Tom. 7.

³ Contra Celsum, L. 1.

suffered: and many more suffered with him; and Lyons was once more dyed with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Vivarius and Androsus, who had been sent by Polycarp there to preach the gospel, were put to death. At Comana in Pamphilia Zoticus the bishop, who had distinguished himself by writing against the Montanists, obtained the crown of martyrdom.

At this trying season it was, that some Churches purchased their peace and quiet by paying money, not only to the magistrates, but also to the informers and soldiers who were appointed to search them out. The pastors of the Churches approved of this proceeding, because it was only suffering the loss of their goods, and preferring that to the endangering of their lives. However casuists may decide this question, it is easily conceivable that the practice might take place with many in real uprightness of heart.

It is usual with God to moderate the sufferings of his people, and not to suffer them to be tried by persecution at once very long and very violent.—In the year two hundred and eleven, after a reign of eighteen years, the tyrant Severus died: and the Church found repose and tranquillity under his son and successor Caracalla, though a monster of wickedness.

Divine providence had long before prepared for the Christians this mitigation of trial, in the circumstances of Caracalla's education. He had known Proculus the Christian, who had recovered the health of his father, and was maintained in his palace to his death: and he had himself been nursed, when an infant, by a Christian woman. Though this could not win his heart to Jesus Christ, it gave him an early predilection in favour of Christians, insomuch that observing, when he was seven years old, one of his play-fellows to be beaten because he followed the Christian religion, he could not, for some time after, behold with patience either his own father or the father of the boy. Certainly few men have ever exceeded him in the ferocious vices; yet, during the six years and two months which he reigned, the Christians found in him friendship and protection. Indeed, for the space of thirty and eight years,—from the death of Severus to the reign of Decius,—if we except the short turbulent interval of Maximinus, the Church enjoyed a continued calm.¹—About the year two hundred and ten Origen came to Rome, where Zephyrinus was bishop, desirous of visiting that ancient Church, but soon returned to Alexandria, and to his office of catechizing. He entrusted to Heraclas, his associate in that employment, the instruction

of the more ignorant, while he himself took care of those who had made a greater proficiency. His active spirit induced him to study the Hebrew language; and the first fruit of his labour was the publication of the Hexapla. In this great work he gave the Hebrew text and the translations of the Septuagint, of Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion,—and two others, which had long been obsolete, and whose authors were unknown. Of these interpreters Symmachus was an Ebionite; that is, he held that Christ was but a mere man; and he inveighed against the genuine gospel of St. Matthew, for no other reason, that I can see, but on account of the clear testimony which the beginning of it affords against his heresy.—These works of Origen, in addition to his constant diligence, both in writing and in preaching, are monuments at least of the most laudable industry. The evangelical reader would wish, no doubt, to see stronger signs of real Christian proficiency in experimental and practical religion;—but we must be content with such matter as ecclesiastical materials afford us.

One Ambrose, addicted to the Valentinian heresy, an extremely fanciful and romantic scheme, not worthy of the reader's attention, found himself confuted by Origen, and was brought over to the Church. Many learned men also felt the force of his argumentations. Heretics and philosophers attended his lectures; and he took, no doubt, a very excellent method to procure regard to himself at least;—he instructed them in profane and secular learning. He confuted the opinions of the different sects by opposing them to each other; and he exposed the various fallacies with so much acuteness and sagacity, that he obtained among the gentiles the reputation of a great Philosopher. He encouraged many persons to study the liberal arts, assuring them, that they would, by that means, be much better furnished for the contemplation of the holy Scriptures:—He was entirely of opinion, that secular and philosophical institutes were very necessary and profitable to his own mind.—Does it escape the reader, how much in the course of Christian annals we are already departed, though by insensible degrees, from Christian simplicity? Here is a man looked up to with reverence, at least by the eastern Church, as a great luminary;—a man, who, in his younger days, was himself a scholar of the amphibious Ammonius; who mixed together Christianity and pagan philosophy; and who, by reading his motley lectures, drew over, in form at least, many of the heathen philosophers to embrace the religion of Jesus. These mention him often in their books: some dedicate their works to him; and others respectfully deliver them to him as their master. All this Eusebius

¹ Spartian's Caracalla. The Pagan author says, "because he followed the Jewish Religion;" but, most probably, he means the Christian.

² Sulpitius Severus, B. ii. C. 42.

tells us with much apparent satisfaction. To him the gospel seems to have triumphed over gentilism by these means.—There is no doubt, but, in a certain sense, Origen's success was great; but I much fear that, in return, the pure gospel suffered greatly by an admixture of gentilism. What can this extraordinary teacher and author mean by asserting the utility and even the "necessity of philosophy for himself as a Christian? Are not the Scriptures ABLE TO MAKE A MAN WISE UNTO SALVATION THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS, THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED TO EVERY GOOD WORK? Suppose a man of common sense, perfectly unacquainted with all the learned lore of Ammonius, to study ONLY the sacred books, with prayer, dependence on divine guidance and illumination, and with self-examination? Is it not conceivable that he may acquire a competent,—nay, even an eminent knowledge of the Scriptures? Certainly an acquaintance with classical and philosophical learning may furnish him with strong arguments to prove the necessity and the excellency of divine revelation; and therefore they deserve seriously to be encouraged in the minds of all who are to instruct others,—for their improvement in taste, language, eloquence, and history; but if they are to REGULATE in religion,—or are thought capable even of ADDING to the stock of theological knowledge,—the Scriptures,—with reverence be it spoken,—may seem to have been defectively written. In truth, we hear, among these learned converts of Origen, nothing—of conviction of sin,—of conversion,—of the influence of the Holy Spirit,—of the love of Christ. They are pleased with their master: Superior parts and learning always command the esteem of mankind:—but, what are all his labours which we have now before us, but vain attempts to mix things which the Holy Ghost has declared will not incorporate? The mischief which actually followed was to be expected: Characters were confounded: and hence-forward, among the learned, the distinction between Christian godliness and human philosophy is but faintly marked.—If Origen had simply and plainly expounded to his learned auditors the peculiar and vital truths of the gospel, I cannot but suspect that many of them would have ceased to attend his instructions.

The famous Porphyry,—than whom Christianity had never a more acrimonious enemy,—takes notice of Origen's allegorical mode of interpreting Scripture, observes that he was acquainted with him when young, and bears testimony to his rapid improvements under Ammonius. He asserts,—what indeed Eusebius, who must have known, contradicts,—that Ammonius, though brought

up a Christian, turned afterwards a gentile. He acknowledges "that Origen continually perused Plato, Numenius, and the rest of the Pythagoreans; that he was well versed in Chæremon the Stoic and in Cornutus; and, that from all these masters, he borrowed the Grecian manner of allegorical interpretation, and applied it to the Jewish Scriptures."

We have seen, before, the wanton spirit of allegory introduced by Ammonius: and it is very probable that Origen then first learnt to treat the Scriptures in the same manner. He had the candour to confess that he had been mistaken in his literal interpretation of our Saviour's words concerning eunuchs. He, afterwards, fell into the contrary extreme, and allegorized all the three clauses in the Gospel of St. Matthew;—and introduced such a complicated scheme of fanciful interpretation, as for many ages after,—through the excessive respect paid to this man,—much obscured the light of Scripture.

There wanted not, however, some persons who found fault with Origen for all this attachment to pagan philosophy. Probably, simple, docile, ingenious minds, which desired to be fed with the "SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD, THAT THEY MIGHT GROW THEREBY," found themselves starved amidst all this heterogeneous, inconsistent doctrine. He felt himself called upon to vindicate his practice;—which he does, only by observing the use of philosophy in confuting heretics; and by the example of Panteus and of Heraclas, an Alexandrian pastor,—his coadjutor, who formerly had worn the common dress, and afterwards took up the philosopher's garb, and still studied earnestly the writings of the heathen philosophers. What does all this prove but the destructive progress of this epidemical disease?

The governor of Arabia sent to Demetrius, desiring the instruction of Origen; who did not hesitate to undertake the necessary journey for that purpose; and he then returned back to Alexandria.

The elegant publication of Minucius Felix,—a work deserving even to be ranked among the Latin classics for neatness and purity of style, was an ornament to the Latin Church. The arguments contained in it against Paganism are well pointed and well adapted to the state of the world at that time: It is only to be regretted that we see not more of the real nature of Christianity in that celebrated performance.

In the year two hundred and seventeen Macrinus succeeded Caracalla, who had reigned a little more than six years.

CHAPTER VI.

STATE OF CHRISTIANITY DURING THE REIGNS OF MACRINUS, HELIOGABALUS, ALEXANDER, MAXIMINUS, PUPIENUS, GORDIAN, AND PHILIP.

MACRINUS reigned one year and two months; and was succeeded by Heliogabalus; whose follies and vices are infamous; but it does not appear that the Church of God suffered on that account. He seems not to have conceived any particular prejudices against Christians; on the contrary, he expressed a desire of removing their rites of worship to Rome.—It is not worth while to attempt an explanation of the views of so senseless a prince.—He was slain at the age of eighteen, in the year two hundred and twenty-two, after he had swayed the sceptre three years and nine months. His cousin Alexander succeeded him; who was then only in the sixteenth year of his age, but was esteemed one of the best moral characters in profane history.—His mother Mammaea, is called by Eusebius,^a a most godly and religious woman.—I am at a loss to vindicate the expression.—It does not appear that she received the faith of Christ:—however,—neither she nor her son persecuted, they rather approved and countenanced, the Christians. They were persons of candour and probity themselves; and they saw that, in ethics at least, the people of God concurred with their own views. Their conduct was laudable; but—MARK the mischief of uniting Christianity with philosophy! How cheap is the term GODLY grown in the eyes of Eusebius!

The providence of God not only secured his Church from suffering, but procured it a favourable patron in this princess and her son. The emperor had a domestic chapel, where, every morning, he worshipped those deceased princes, whose characters were most esteemed: their statues were placed among those of the gods; and into this company he introduced Apollonius of Tyana, Jesus Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus.^b He had a desire to erect even a temple to Christ and to receive him regularly into the number of the gods.

There are, on record, other instances of his candour towards the Christians.—The right of possessing a certain piece of ground was claimed by a tavern-keeper: It had been common^c for a long time, and the Christians had occupied it for a place of worship.—“It is fitter,” said Alexander, “that God should be served there, in any

manner whatever, rather than that it should be used for a tavern.” He frequently used this Christian sentence, “DO AS YOU WOULD BE DONE BY.” He obliged a crier to repeat it when he punished any person; and was so fond of it, that he caused it to be written in his palace and in the public buildings. When he was going to appoint governors of provinces or other officers, he proposed their names in public, giving the people notice, that if they had any crime to accuse them of, they should come forward and make it known. “It would be a shame,” says he, “not to do that with respect to governors who are entrusted with men’s properties and lives, which is done by Jews and Christians when they publish the names of those whom they mean to ordain Priests.” And, indeed, by Origen’s account,^b the Christians were so very careful in the choice of their pastors, that the civil magistrates were by no means to be compared with them in probity and sound morality. This prince had, it seems, too much gravity and virtue for the times in which he lived:—for some persons, in derision, called him Archysynagogus.^c

It seems to have been his plan to encourage every thing that carried the appearance of religion and virtue; and to discountenance whatever was openly immoral and profane.—His historian^d tells us, “that he favoured astrologers, and permitted them to teach publicly; that he himself was well skilled in the vain science of the Aruspices, and was master of that of the Augurs in a high degree.”

In the year two hundred and twenty-nine, Alexander was obliged to go to the East, and to reside at Antioch. His mother Mammaea went with him, and having heard of the fame of Origen, and being very curious to hear new things; she sent him a guard, and caused him to come to her. All the account we have of this interview is, that he continued there a while, and published many things to the glory of God, and concerning the power of the heavenly doctrine; and, that he then returned to his school at Alexandria.

What Origen taught this princess we are not told: What he ought to have taught her, the Acts of the Apostles would have amply informed him.—A plain and artless declaration of the vanity and wickedness of all the reigning idolatries and philosophies; sees;—and what is still more—of the corruption, helplessness, and misery of man, and a faithful information concerning the only way of salvation by Jesus Christ, the great duty of believing on him, of confessing him, and of admitting the sanctifying operations of his Spirit,—these things a perfectly sound

^a Euseb. L. 6. Fleury, B. v. iv.

^b Lamprid.

^c That is without owner or possessor.

^b Ag. Celsus, B. iii. and viii.

^c The chief ruler of the synagogue

^d Lampridus.

preacher would have shewn to her; and his exhortations would have been entirely founded on these doctrines; nor would he have felt the necessity of aiding his message by the authority of Plato or of any other philosopher.—History informs us of no remarkable effect which attended the ministry of Origen on this occasion. That he spoke what he believed and what he thought most wise and expedient, is not to be doubted; but we may be allowed to lament, that his own state and views were too similar to those of *Mamma* and of her son to have permitted him to represent Christianity to them in the clearest and the most striking manner. Is truth, it is to be feared that a number of Christians so called, at this time, were much of the same religion with Alexander himself.—He seems to have learnt, in some measure, the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead; and by the help of the eclectic philosophy to have consolidated all religions into one mass.—But the scriptural method of teaching things that accompany salvation will not incorporate with this system of doctrines.

The liberality of his friend Ambrose enabled Origen to prosecute his scriptural studies with vast rapidity. Ambrose himself was a deacon of the Church; and, by his faithfulness under persecution, he obtained the name of Confessor.

At this time Noetus of Smyrna propagated the same heresy in the East, which Praxeas had done in the West,—namely, that there was no distinction among the divine persons. The pastors of the Church of Ephesus, summoned him before them; and demanded whether he really maintained this opinion. At first he denied it; but afterwards, having formed a party, he became more bold, and publicly taught his heresy. Being again interrogated by the pastors, he said, "What harm have I done? I glorify none but one God; I know none besides him who hath been begotten, who suffered and died." He evidently, in this way, confounded the persons of the Father and the Son together; and being obstinate in his views, he was ejected out of the Church with all his disciples.—We have here an additional proof of the jealousy of the primitive Christians in support of the fundamental articles of Christianity: The communion also indissolubly preserved between heretical poverty and pride of heart appeared in this teacher.—He called himself *Moses*, and his brother *Aaron*.

Origen was now sent for to Athens to assist the Churches, which were there disturbed with several heresies. Thence he went to Palestine. At *Cæsarea* Theoctis-

tus the bishop, and Alexander bishop of Jerusalem ordained him a priest at the age of forty-five, about the year two hundred and thirty. Demetrius, his own bishop, was offended; and, at length, divulged what had hitherto been kept very secret,—the indiscreet self-mutilation before-mentioned, which took place in the youth of Origen. Alexander defended himself in what he had done by the encomium which Demetrius had given of Origen in his letter. The latter, on his return to Alexandria, found his bishop quite incensed against him: for, he procured even his ejection from the Church by a council of pastors on account of some errors that appeared in his works. What judgment is to be formed of these errors I shall have a future occasion to consider. Banished from Egypt, this great man lived now in Palestine with his friends Theoctistus and Alexander, still followed by many disciples, and particularly respected by Firmilian of Cappadocia, who looked upon it as a happiness to enjoy his instructions. Here also the famous Gregory Thaumaturgus attended his theological lectures, which, even in his exile, were delivered in Origen's usual manner.

Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, died, after having held that office forty-three years. A long period!—but, our information is too indistinct and scanty to enable us to pronounce his real character. If we were sure that he preserved a very upright conscience toward God in things of essential moment, something might be advanced to justify his severe treatment of Origen: but, as we are left on that head to conjectures, it is, perhaps, better to be silent.—Origen's assistant Heraclas succeeded him.

In the year two hundred and thirty-five, Alexander was murdered together with his mother; and Maximin the murderer obtained the empire. His malice against the house of Alexander disposed him to persecute the Christians; and he gave orders to put to death the pastors of the Churches. The persecution was not confined to them: Others suffered at the same time; and, it seems by Firmilian's letter to Cyprian of Carthage, that the flame extended to Cappadocia. Ambrose, the friend of Origen, and Protocetus, minister of *Cæsarea*, suffered much in the course of it; and to them Origen dedicated his book of martyrs. He himself was obliged to retire. But the tyrant's reign lasted only three years, in which time it must be confessed that the rest of the world had tasted of his ferocity as much as the Christians had.—His persecution of THEM was local; but his cruelty to mankind in general seemed insatiable.

Pupienus and Balbinus, the successors of Maximin, were slain in the year two hundred and thirty-eight: Gordian reigned for

six years, and was then supplanted by the usual military turbulence, which made way for his murderer, Philip the Arabian.

Origen, in a letter to his scholar Gregory Thaumaturgus, exhorts him to apply himself chiefly to the Holy Scriptures; to read it very attentively; not to speak or judge of it lightly, but with unshaken faith and prayer, which, says he, is absolutely necessary for the understanding of it.—This exhortation will be noticed by the pious reader, doubtless, with much satisfaction. It proves that his philosophy had not obliterated his Christianity.

A fresh attempt was now made to pervert the doctrine of the person of Christ.—Beryllus, bishop of Bostra in Arabia, affirmed that our Saviour, before his incarnation, had no proper divinity, but only his Father's divinity dwelling in himself. Thus Eusebius states the matter. It is not easy to form clear ideas of these sentiments: they seem, however, to annihilate the divine personality of the eternal Word. The man, it seems, was not obstinate: he listened to sound scriptural argument, and was therefore reclaimed by means of Origen. He even loved his instructor ever after, and was sincerely thankful to him;—a circumstance, which reflects an amiable light on the character of Beryllus.¹

Philip began to reign in the year two hundred and forty-four. Eusebius tells us that he was a Christian; and indeed that he was so, by *PROFESSOR*, seems well attested by the concurrent voice of antiquity. He is said to have submitted to certain ecclesiastical censures from a bishop; but the report is void of proper authenticity;—and most probably, he ranked at his death only as a Catechumen.—There is, however, no doubt, but in the fourth year of his reign, and in the year of Christ two hundred and forty-seven, he allowed and conducted the secular games, which were full of idolatry: and this is a fact, which clearly proves that he was not disposed to give up any thing for the sake of Christ: And, in general, there is not the least ground to conclude from history that he was a cordial friend to the gospel.—Nevertheless the progress of Christianity in the world at this time must have been very great, which could induce so worldly-minded a person as Philip to countenance it without reserve or ambiguity.—To this emperor and to his wife Severa, Origen wrote an epistle, which was extant in Eusebius' time.

It appears from one of the homilies of Origen that the long peace which the Church,—with only the short interruption of Maximian's persecution,—had enjoyed, had

brought on a great degree of lukewarmness and even of much religious indecorum. Let the reader only notice the difference between the scenes which he here describes and the conduct of the Christians both in the first and second century, and he will be affected with the greatness of the declension.

"Several," says he, "come to Church only on solemn festivals; and then, not so much for instruction as diversion: Some go out again as soon as they have heard the lecture, without conferring or asking the pastors any questions: Others stay not till the lecture is ended; and others hear not so much as a single word; but entertain themselves in a corner of the Church."

By the blessing of Almighty God, nothing was so likely to conquer this careless spirit, as the faithful dispensation of the peculiar truths of the gospel in a practical manner, so as to search the heart.—But the ability as well as the taste for doing this had much declined, in the eastern part of the Church especially.—Origen complains elsewhere of the ambitious and haughty manners of pastors, and of the wrong steps which some took to obtain *PAROCHIA*.

This great man was now once more employed in Arabia in confuting another error, namely,—of those who denied the intermediate state of souls; and this he managed with his usual good success.²

Philip enjoyed the fruits of his crimes five years, and was then slain and succeeded by Decius.—A little before his death, in the year two hundred and forty-eight, CYPRIAN was chosen bishop of Carthage.—A star of the first magnitude,—when we consider the times in which he lived.—Let us recreate ourselves with the contemplation of it: We are fatigued with hunting for Christian goodness; and we have discovered but little: and that with much difficulty.—We shall find Cyprian to be a character, who partook indeed of the declensions which we have noticed and lamented; but who was still far superior, I apprehend, in real simplicity and piety to the Christians of the East.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONVERSION OF CYPRIAN.

THE life of this prelate was written by Pontianus his deacon. It is to be regretted, that one who must have known him so well, should have written in so incompetent a manner. Very little distinct information is to be gathered from him; but Cyprian's own letters are extant, and from them I shall endeavour to exhibit whatever is of the great-

¹ Hieronymus. *Eccle. Scrip. L. XX.*—See Dr. Waterland on the Importance of the Trinity.

² Fleury.

³ Euseb. B. 6—34.

est moment. They are, in truth, a valuable treasure of ecclesiastical history: The spirit, taste, discipline, and habits of the times, among Christians, are strongly delineated; nor have we in all the third century any account to be compared with them. He was a professor of oratory in the city of Carthage, and a man of wealth, quality, and dignity. Cæcilius, a Carthaginian presbyter, had the felicity, under God, to conduct him to the knowledge of Christ; and, in his gratitude, Cyprian afterwards assumed the premonium of Cæcilius. His conversion was about the year two hundred and forty-six; and two years before his elevation to the See of Carthage. About thirteen years comprehends the whole scene of his Christian life.—But God can do great things in a little time; or, to speak more nervously with the sacred writer, “ONE DAY IS WITH THE LORD AS A THOUSAND YEARS.” He did not proceed by slow painful steps of argumentation, but seems to have been led on with vast rapidity by the effectual operation of the Divine Spirit:—and he happily escaped, in a great measure at least, the shoals and quicksands of false learning and self-conceit, which so much tarnished the character of his eastern brethren. Faith and love in native simplicity appear to have been possessed by him when an early convert. He saw with pity the poor of the flock; and he knew no method so proper of employing “the unrighteous mammon as in relieving their distress.”—He sold whole estates for their benefit.

It was an excellent rule of the Apostle concerning ordination, “Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” There appeared, however, in Cyprian, a spirit at once so simple, so zealous, and so intelligent, that in about two years after his conversion he was chosen presbyter, and then bishop of Carthage.

It was no feigned virtue that thus advanced him in the eyes of the people. With Cyprian the love of Christ evidently preponderated above all secular considerations. In vain his wife opposed his Christian spirit of liberality. The widow, the orphan, and the poor, found in him a sympathizing benefactor continually. The presbyter Cæcilius must have beheld with much delight the growing virtues of his pupil:—When dying, he recommended to his care his own wife and children. It was with no satisfaction that Cyprian observed the designs of the people to choose him for their bishop. He retired to avoid solicitation: His house was besieged: His retreat was rendered impossible. He yielded at length, and with much reluctance accepted the PAINFUL PRE-EMINENCE. For so he soon found it.—Five presbyters, however, were enemies to his exaltation. His

lenity, patience, and benevolence towards them were remarked by every one.

The active spirit of Cyprian was, no doubt, much employed before he was made a bishop: Indeed Pontius tells us, that this was actually the case; but he communicates no particulars. St. Austin says, that his letter to Donatus was his first work; and, therefore, the time of writing it may safely be placed before his arrival at episcopal dignity. Part of this letter, as it will illustrate his conversion, and shew the spirit of a man penetrated with divine love, and lately recovered from the idolatry of the world, well deserves to be translated.—“I find your whole care and concern at present is for conversion; you look at me; and, in your affection, expect much from me:—I fear, I cannot answer your expectations.—Small fruits must be looked for from my unworthiness;—Yet, I will make the attempt; for the SUBJECT MATTER is all on my side.—Let plausible arts of ambition be used in courts; but when we speak of the Lord God, plainness and sincerity, not the powers of eloquence, should be used. Hear, then, things not eloquent, but important; not courtly, but rude and simple;—so, should the divine goodness be celebrated always with artless truth.—Hear then an account of something which is felt before it is learnt; and is not collected by a long course of speculation, but is imbibed by the soul, through the compendium of grace ripening her, as it were all at once.

While I lay in darkness and the night of paganism, and when I fluctuated uncertain and dubious with wandering steps in the sea of a tempestuous age, ignorant of my own life, and alienated from light and truth, it appeared to me a harsh and difficult thing, as my manners then were, to obtain what divine grace had promised,—namely, that a man should be born again; and that, being animated to a new life by the salutary washing of regeneration,* he should strip himself of what he was before, and though the body remained the same, he should, in his mind, become altogether a new creature. How can so great a change be possible, said I,—that a man should suddenly and at once put off what nature and habit have confirmed in him. These evils are deeply and closely fixed in us. How shall he learn perjury who has been accustomed to expensive and magnificent feasts? And how shall he who has been accustomed to purple, gold, and costly attire, condescend to the simplicity of a plebeian habit? Can he who was delighted with the honours of ambition, live private and obscure? Further,—the man has been accustomed to crowds of clients, and will think solitude the most dreadful punishment.—He must still, thought I, be infested by

* An instance we have here of the powerful effects of regeneration attending baptism in these days.

tenacious allurements : Drunkenness, pride, anger, rapacity, cruelty, ambition, and lust, must still domineer over him.

These reflections passed my mind very often ; for they were peculiarly applicable to my own case.—I was myself entangled in many errors of my former life, from which I did not think it possible to be cleared : hence, I favoured my vices, and, through despair of what was better, I stuck close to them as part of my very frame and constitution. But after the filth of my former sins was washed away in the laver of regeneration, and divine light, from above, had infused itself into my heart now purified and cleansed ; after, through the effusion of the Holy Spirit from heaven, the new birth had made me a new creature indeed,—immediately, and in an amazing manner, dubious things began to be cleared up ; things once shut were opened ; dark things shone forth ; and what before seemed difficult and even impossible, now appeared easy and practicable. I saw that, that which was born after the flesh and had lived enslaved by wickedness, was of the “ earth earthy ;” but that the new life, now animated by the Holy Ghost, began to be of God. You know and recollect as perfectly as I do my conversion from a deadly criminal state to a state of lively virtue :—You know what these opposite states have done for me :—what they have taken away ; and what they have conferred : and, therefore, I need not proclaim it : To boast of one’s own praises is odious ; though that cannot be called an expression of boasting, but of gratitude, which ascribes nothing to the virtue of man, but professes all to proceed from the gift of God : Thus deliverance from sin is the consequence of sound faith :—The preceding sinful state was owing to human blindness.—Of God it is,—of God, I say, even all that we can do :—thence we live ;—thence we have strength ;—thence we conceive and assume vigour ; even though, as yet, placed here below, we have some marked presentiments of our future felicity. Only,—let fear be the guardian of innocence ; that the Lord, who kindly shone into our minds with an effusion of heavenly grace, may be detained as our guest by the steady obedience of the soul which delights in him,—lest pardon received should beget a careless presumption, and the old enemy break in afresh.

But if you keep the road of innocence and of righteousness, if you walk with footsteps that do not slide,—if depending upon God with all your heart and with all your might, you be only what you have begun to be, you will then find, that according to the proportion of faith, so will your attainments and enjoyments be. For no bound or measure can be assigned in the reception of divine grace, as is the case of earthly benefits. The Holy Spirit is poured forth profusely ; is

confined by no limits ; is restrained by no barriers ; he flows perpetually ; he bestows in rich abundance : Let our heart only thirst and be open to receive him : As much of capacious faith as we bring, so much abounding grace do we draw from him. Hence an ability is given, with sober chastity, uprightness of mind, and purity of language, to heal the sick, to extinguish the force of poison, to cleanse the filth of distempered minds, to speak peace to the hostile ; to give tranquillity to the violent, and gentleness to the fierce ; to compel, by menaces, unclean and wandering spirits to quit their hold of men ; to scourge and controul the foe, and, by torments, to bring him to confess what he is.—Thus, in what we have already begun to be, the spirit received enjoys its liberty : though, till we have changed our body and members, the prospect, as yet carnal, is obscured by the cloud of the world. What a power, what an energy is this !—that the soul should not only be emancipated from slavery, and be made free and pure ; but also stronger and more powerful, so as to become victorious and triumphant over the powers of the enemy !”

The testimony here given to the ejection of evil spirits, as a common thing among the Christians, even in the third century, deserves to be noticed, as a proof that miraculous influences had not ceased in the Church. Minutius Felix speaks to the same purpose, and I think with more precision. “ Being adjured by the living God, they tremble and remain wretched and reluctant in the bodies of men : they either leap out immediately, or vanish by degrees, as the faith of the patient or the grace of the person administering relief may be strong or weak.”—Indeed the testimony of the Fathers in these times is so general and concurrent, that the fact itself cannot be denied without universally impeaching their veracity. It is not my province to dwell on this point : The sanctifying graces of the Spirit call for my particular attention ; and these are described by Cyprian as by one who had seen and tasted them. No doubt, after his conversion, he experienced in himself vital, energetic and divine principles, far beyond the reach of ordinary rational processes ;—and he appeals to his friend Donatus if he had not also felt the same.

We may safely, therefore, infer that such things were then not infrequent among Christians, though, certainly, the *effusions* of the Holy Ghost did not so much abound as in the two former centuries.—Indeed what but the power of God on the heart can account for a change so sudden, so rapid, and yet so firm and solid, as that of Cyprian ? What can be conceived more opposite than the last thirteen years of his life compared with the former part of it ?—Will modern fastidiousness call all this *Enthusiasm* ?

In this narrative, the reader will notice, that the essential doctrines of justification and regeneration by divine grace were not only believed but experienced by this zealous African.—The difference between mere human and divine teaching is rendered striking by such cases. With no great furniture of learning, it was his happiness to know little, if any thing, of the then reigning philosophy.—We see a man of business and of the world rising at once a Phoenix in the Church; and though no extraordinary Theologian in point of accurate knowledge, yet an useful practical divine, an accomplished pastor, flaming with the love of God and of souls, and with unremitted activity spending and being spent for Christ Jesus.—This is the Lord's doing; and it should be remarked as HIS WORK.—We shall see that Cyprian's own conversion prepared him for actual service.—Argument and dispute prevailed among Christians in the East;—brotherly love in the West.

He seems to record a remarkable influence of divine grace as having accompanied his baptism. It is reasonable to suppose that this was commonly the case at that time: The inward and spiritual grace really attended the outward and visible sign. And it is to be lamented, that the corruption and perversion of after-ages, availing itself of the ambiguous language of the fathers on this subject,—which, with them, was natural enough,—supposed a NECESSARY connexion to take place where there had been a frequent one. In Cyprian's time to call baptism itself the new birth was not very dangerous: In our age it is poison itself: Men are apt to content themselves with the outward and visible sign; and it has long been the fashion to suppose all persons, who have been baptized when they were infants, to be, of course, when they are grown up, in a state of regeneration by the Holy Spirit: and thus men have learned to furnish themselves with a convenient evasion of all that is written in Scripture concerning the godly motions of the third person of the sacred Trinity.

Cyprian goes on,—“And that the marks of divine goodness may appear the more perspicuously by a discovery of the truth, I would lay open to your view the real state of the world;—I would remove the thick darkness which covers it, and detect the hidden mischiefs and the evils which it contains.—For a little time, fancy yourself withdrawn to the top of a high mountain;—thence inspect the appearance of things below you; look all around;—preserve yourself unfettered by worldly connections,—observe the fluctuating tempests of the world;—you will then pity mankind; you will understand and be sensible of your own happiness;—you will be more thankful to God; and, with

more joy, you will congratulate yourself on your escape.”

He then gives an affecting view of the immensity of evils which the state of mankind at that time exhibited; and graphically delineates the miseries of public and of private life; after which he returns to the description of the blessings of true Christianity.

“The only placid and sound tranquility,” says he, “the only solid, firm, and perpetual security is, to be delivered from the tempests of this restless scene, to be stationed in the port of salvation; to lift up the eyes from earth to heaven, and to be admitted into the favour of the Lord: Such a man approaches, in his thoughts, near to his God; and justly glories, that whatever others deem sublime and great in human affairs,—is absolutely beneath his notice. He, who is greater than the world, can desire nothing, can want nothing from the world. What an unshaken protection; what a truly divine shelter fraught with eternal good, it must be, to be loosed from the snares of an entangling world, to be purged from earthly dregs, and to be wafted into the light of immortal day! When we see what the insidious rage of a destructive enemy was plotting against us;—certainly, we must be the more compelled to love what we shall be, because we have now learned both to know and to condemn what we were. Nor is there, for this end, any need of price, of canvassing, or of manual labour: This complete dignity or power of man is not to be acquired by elaborate efforts: The gift of God is gratuitous and easy. As the sun shines freely, as the fountain bubbles, as the rain bedews, so the Celestial Spirit infuses himself. The soul looks up to heaven and becomes conscious of its Author: It then begins actually to be what it believes itself to be: It is higher than the firmament, and sublimer than all earthly power. Only,—do you, whom the heavenly warfare hath marked for divine service, preserve untainted and sober your Christian course by the virtues of religion. Let prayer or reading be your assiduous employment: Sometimes speak with God: At other times hear him speak to you: Let him instruct you by his precepts; let him regulate you: Whom he hath made rich, none shall make poor. There can be no penury with him whose heart has once been enriched with celestial bounty. Roofs arched with gold, and houses inlaid with marble, will be vile in your eyes, when you know that your own minds are rather to be cultivated and adorned: That this house is more valuable which the Lord hath chosen to be his temple, in which the Holy Ghost has begun to dwell. Let us adorn this house with the paintings of innocence, let us illuminate it

with the light of righteousness. This will never fall into ruin through the decays of age: Its ornaments shall never fade. Whatever is not genuine is precarious, and affords to the possessor no sure foundation. This remains in its culture perpetually vivid; in honour, and in splendour, spotless and eternal: It can neither be abolished nor extinguished.—Is it then capable of no alteration?—Yes,—It will receive a rich improvement at the resurrection of the body.

Let us be careful how we spend our time: let us rejoice; but let not an hour of entertainment be inconsistent or unconnected with divine grace. Let the sober banquet resound with PSALMS; and as your memory is good, and voice harmonious, perform this office,—as I believe you do.—It will be more than agreeable,—it will be delightful,—to your dear friends to hear of your spiritual and religious harmony.”

In all this the intelligent reader sees the picture of an active Christian,—possessed of some rich portion of that effusion of the Holy Ghost which, from the Apostles' days, still exhibited Christ Jesus,—and fitted by experience to communicate to others the real gospel, and to be an happy instrument of guiding souls to that rest which remains for the people of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PERSECUTION OF DECIVS.—THE GOVERNMENT OF CYPRIAN TILL HIS RETIREMENT.

How Cyprian conducted himself in his bishopric, who is sufficient to relate? says Pontius, in the fulness of his admiration. Some PARTICULAR account however might have been expected from one who had such large opportunity of information. He does make some brief observations on his external appearance. “His looks had the due mixture of gravity and cheerfulness; so that it was doubtful whether he was more worthy of love or of reverence. His dress also was correspondent to his looks: He had renounced the secular pomp to which his rank in life entitled him;—yet he avoided affected penury.”—From a man of Cyprian's piety and good sense united, such a conduct might be expected.

While Cyprian was labouring to recover the spirit of godliness among the Africans, which long peace had corrupted, Philip was slain and succeeded by Decius. His enmity to the former emperor conspired with his pagan prejudices to bring on the most dreadful persecution which the Church had yet experienced. It was evident that nothing less than the destruction of the Christian name was intended. The chronology

is here remarkably embarrassed; nor is it an object of much consequence to trouble either myself or the reader with studious attempts to settle it. Suffice it to say that the eventful period before us of Cyprian's bishopric extends from the year two hundred and forty-eight to two hundred and sixty, and that Decius's succession to the empire must have taken place toward the beginning of it. The persecution raged with astonishing fury, beyond the example of former persecutions, both in the East and West. The latter is the scene before us at present. In a treatise of Cyprian concerning the lapsed, we have an affecting account of the declension from the spirit of Christianity, which had taken place before his conversion, and which moved God to chastise his Church. “If the cause of our miseries,” says he, “be investigated, the cure of the wound may be found. The Lord would have his family to be TERNED. And because long peace had corrupted the discipline divinely revealed to us, the heavenly chastisement hath raised up our faith which had lain almost dormant: and when, by our sins, we had deserved to suffer still more, the merciful Lord so moderated all things, that the whole scene rather deserves the name of a trial than a persecution. Each had been bent on improving his patrimony; and had forgotten what believers had done under the Apostles, and what they ought always to do:—They were brooding over the arts of amassing wealth:—The pastors and the deacons each forgot their duty: Works of mercy were neglected, and discipline was at the lowest ebb.—Luxury and effeminacy prevailed: Merititious arts in dress were cultivated: Fraud and deceit were practised among brethren.—Christians could unite themselves in matrimony with unbelievers; could swear not only without reverence, but even without veracity. With haughty asperity they despised their ecclesiastical superiors: They railed against one another with outrageous acrimony, and conducted quarrels with determined malice:—Even many bishops, who ought to be guides and patterns to the rest, neglecting the peculiar duties of their stations, gave themselves up to secular pursuits:—They deserted their places of residence and their flocks: They travelled through distant provinces in quest of pleasure and gain; gave no assistance to the needy brethren; but were insatiable in their thirst of money:—They possessed estates by fraud, and multiplied usury. What have we not deserved to suffer for such a conduct? Even the Divine Word hath foretold us what we might expect, “IF HIS CHILDREN FORSAKE MY LAW, AND WALK NOT IN MY JUDGMENTS, I WILL VISIT THEIR OFFENCES WITH THE ROD, AND THEIR SIN WITH SCOURGES.” These things

had been denounced and foretold, but in vain: Our sins had brought our affairs to that pass, that because we had despised the Lord's directions, we were obliged to undergo a correction of our multiplied evils, and a trial of our faith by severe penalties."

That a deep declension from Christian purity had taken place not only in the East, where false philosophy aided its progress, as we have seen, but also in the West, where the operation of no peculiar cause can be traced beyond the common influence of prosperity on human depravity, is now completely evident from this account of Cyprian: and, it deserves to be remarked, that the first grand and general declension, after the primary effusion of the Divine Spirit, should be fixed about the middle of this century. The wisdom and goodness of God is also to be observed in qualifying the bishop of Carthage by a strong personal work on his own heart; and then, in raising him to the See of Carthage to superintend the western part of his Church in a time of trial like the present. The trial, no doubt, was kindly intended by Providence to operate as a medicine for the revival of the declining spirit of Christianity; but it needed, nevertheless, all that fortitude, seal, and wisdom with which Cyprian was so eminently endowed.

In such a situation it was not to be expected that the people under the bishop's care should, in general, stand their ground: avarice had taken deep root among them; and vast numbers lapsed into idolatry immediately. Even before men were accused as Christians, "many ran to the forum and sacrificed to the gods as they were ordered; and the crowds of apostates were so great, that the magistrates wished to delay numbers of them till the next day, but they were importuned by the wretched suppliants to be allowed to prove themselves heathens that very night."

At Rome the persecution raged with unsubmitting violence. There Fabian the bishop suffered; and, for some time, it became impracticable to elect a successor: yet, it does not appear that the metropolis suffered more, in proportion, than some other places, since we find that the flame of persecution had driven several bishops from distant provinces, and made them fly for shelter to Rome." Cyprian, however, having been regularly informed by the Roman clergy of the martyrdom of their bishop, congratulated them on his glorious exit, and exulted on occasion of his uprightness and integrity. He expresses the pleasure he conceived in observing that his edifying example had so much penetrated their minds; and owns the energy which he himself felt to imitate the pattern.

Meynes and Maximus, two Roman persecutors, with other confessors, were also seized and imprisoned. Attempts were repeatedly made to persuade them to relinquish the faith, but in vain. Cyprian found means to write to THEM ALSO a letter full of benevolence, and breathing the strongest pathos. He tells them that his heart was with them continually,—that he prayed for them in his public ministry,—and in private. He comforts them under the pressures of hunger and thirst which they endured, and congratulates them for living now not for this life but for the next; and particularly, because their example would be a means of confirming many who were in a wavering state.—But Carthage soon became an unsafe scene to Cyprian himself.—By repeated suffrages of the people at the theatre, he was demanded to be taken and given to the lions; and it behoved him immediately either to retire into a place of safety, or to expect the crown of martyrdom.

Cyprian's spirit in interpreting Scripture was more simple, and more accommodated to receive its plain and obvious sense, than that of men who had learned to refine and subtilize. He knew the liberty which his Divine Master had given to his people,—of fleeing when they were persecuted in one city, to another;—and he embraced it. Nay, he seems scarcely to have thought it lawful to do otherwise.—Even the last state of his martyrdom evinces this.—His manner of enduring it, when it, providentially, was brought on him, sufficiently acquits him of all suspicion of pusillanimity.—To unite such seemingly opposite things as discretion and fortitude, each in a very high degree, is a sure characteristic of greatness in a Christian:—It is grace in its highest exercise.—Pontius thinks it was not without a particular divine direction that he was moved to act in this manner for the benefit of the Church.

Behold him at present, in some place of retreat, under the protection of God, and through the love of his people safe for the space of two years from the arm of a most barbarous persecution;—and let us next see how he employed this interval of retirement.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HISTORY OF CYPRIAN AND OF THE WESTERN CHURCH DURING HIS RETIREMENT OF TWO YEARS.

CYPRIAN was never more active than in his retreat. Nothing of moment occurred in co-

ecclesiastical affairs either in Africa or in Italy with which he was unacquainted; and his counsels, under God, were of the greatest influence in both countries. I shall endeavour to abbreviate the account from his own letters which were written in this period.

The presbyters of Carthage sent Clementinus, a sub-deacon, to Rome, from whom the Roman clergy learnt the place of the retreat of the bishop. They, in return, express to the Africans their perfect agreement in opinion concerning the propriety of the concealment, because he was an eminent character, and a life extremely valuable to the Church. They represent the conflict as very important, which God had now permitted for the trial of his servants: They said, it was the express purpose of God to manifest both to angels and to men, that the conqueror shall be crowned, and the conquered, that is, the faithless apostate, be self-condemned. They express the deep sense which they had both of their own situation and that of the clergy of Carthage, whose duty it was to take care not to incur the censure passed on faithless shepherds in the prophet,¹ but rather to imitate their Lord the good shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep,² and who so earnestly and repeatedly charges Simon Peter, as a proof of his love to his Master, "to feed his sheep."³ "We would not wish, dear brethren," say they, "to find you mere mercenaries, but good shepherds, since you know it must be highly sinful in you not to exhort the brethren to stand immovable in the faith, lest they be totally subverted by idolatry. Nor do we only in words thus exhort you; but, as you may learn from many who came from us to you, our actions, with the help of God, accord with our declarations: we make no scruple to hazard our lives; for we have before our eyes the fear of God and of eternal punishment, rather than the fear of men and of a temporary calamity: we do not desert the brethren; we exhort them to stand in the faith, and to be ready to follow their Lord when called: We have also done our utmost to recover those who had gone up to sacrifice in order that they might save their lives. Our Church stands firm in the faith in general: Some indeed, overcome by terror, either because they were persons in high life, or were moved by the fear of man, have lapsed; yet these, though separated from us, we do not give up as lost altogether, but we exhort them to repent, if they may find mercy with him who is able to save: we would not, by abandoning them, render their case hopeless and incurable.

We wish you, brethren, to act in the same manner, as much as in you lies:—Exhort the lapsed, if they should be seized a second time, to confess their Saviour. And we

suggest to you to receive again into communion any of these, if they heartily desire it, and give proofs of sound repentance. And, certainly, officers should be appointed to minister to the widows, the sick, those in prison, and those who are in a state of banishment. A special care should be exercised over the catechumens, to preserve them from apostacy; and those, whose duty it is to inter the dead, ought to consider the interment of the martyrs as matter of indispensable obligation.

Sure we are, that those servants, who shall be found to have been thus faithful in that which is least, will have "authority over ten cities." May God, who does all things for those who hope in him, grant, that we may all be found thus diligently employed! The brethren in bonds, the clergy, and the whole Church salute you: We all of us with earnest solicitude watch and pray for all who call on the name of the Lord. And we beseech you, in return, to be mindful of us also in your prayers."

Several observations present themselves on this occasion. 1. It appears, that, both at Rome and Carthage, the reduced mode of episcopacy was the form of ecclesiastical government which gradually prevailed in the Christian world. It is not to be supposed that the whole body of Christians either at Rome, or at Carthage, was no more than what might be contained in one assembly.—The inference is obvious.

2. The Roman Church appears, in the beginning of Decius's persecution at least, to have been in a much more thriving state than that of Carthage, and their clergy to have been models worthy of imitation in all ages.

3. The administration of discipline among the Christians, wisely tempered by tenderness and strictness, is truly admirable.

4. The work of the divine Spirit also amongst them, infusing the largest charity, even to the laying down of their lives for the brethren, is manifest beyond contradiction.—Now mark the spirit of a primitive pastor, full of charity and meekness, of zeal and prudence, in the following letter of Cyprian to his clergy.

"Being hitherto preserved by the favour of God, I salute you, dearest brethren, and I rejoice to hear of your safety. As present circumstances permit not my presence among you, I beg you, by your faith and by the ties of religion, to discharge your duties, in conjunction with mine also, that nothing be wanting either on the head of discipline or of diligence. I beg that nothing may be wanting to supply the necessities of those, who are imprisoned because of their glorious profession and avowal of God, or who labour

¹ Ezek. xxxiv. 5, 4.

² John x.

³ John xxi.

⁴ Luke xix. 18.

under the pressures of indigence and poverty, since the whole ecclesiastical fund is in the hands of the clergy for this very purpose, that a number may have it in their power to relieve the wants of individuals.

I beg further, that you would use every prudential and cautious method to procure the peace of the Church; and if the brethren, in their charity, wish to confer with and to visit those pious suffering converts, whom the divine goodness hath thus far shone upon by such good beginnings, they should, however, do this cautiously, not in crowds, nor in a multitude; lest any odium should hence arise, and the liberty of admission be denied altogether; and lest while, through greediness, we aim at too much, we lose all. Consult therefore and provide, that this may be done safely and with discretion; so that the presbyters, one by one, accompanied by the deacons in turn, may successively minister to them, because the change of persons visiting them is less liable to breed suspicion. For in all things we ought to be meek and humble, as becomes the servants of God, to redeem the time, to have a regard for peace, and to provide for the people. Most dearly beloved and longed-for, I wish you all prosperity, and intreat you to remember us. Salute all the brethren. Victor the deacon, and those that are with us, salute you."

The defection of such numbers must have penetrated deeply the fervent and charitable spirit of Cyprian. Not only very many of the laity, but part of the clergy also had been seduced. "I could have wished," says he, "dearest brethren, to have had it in my power to salute your whole body sound and entire; but as the melancholy tempest has, in addition to the fall of so many of the people, also affected part of the clergy,—sad accumulation of our sorrow! we pray the Lord, that, by divine mercy, we may be enabled to salute you at least,—whom we have known hitherto to stand firm in faith and virtue,—as sound and unshaken followers of Christ for the time to come.—Though the cause loudly called on me to hasten my return to you; first, on account of my own desire and regret for the loss of your company,—a desire which burns strongly within me;—in the next place, that we might, in full council, settle the various objects in the Church which require attention; yet, on the whole, to remain still concealed seemed more advisable on account of other advantages which pertain to the general safety, an account of which our dear brother Tertullus will give you; who, agreeably to that care which he employs in divine works with so much zeal, was also the adviser of this counsel, that I should act with caution and moderation, and not rashly commit myself to the public view in

a place where I had so often been sought and called for.

Relying therefore on your affection and conscientiousness, of which I have had good experience, I exhort and charge you by these letters, that you, whose situation is less dangerous and invidious, would supply my lack of service. Let the poor be attended to as much as possible,—those I mean, who have stood the test of persecution: suffer them not to want necessities; lest indigence do that against them which persecution could not. I know the charity of the brethren has provided for very many of them:—yet,—as I wrote to you before, even while they were in prison,—if any persons do want meat or clothing,* let their necessities be supplied."

In the sequel of this epistle, he shews a deep knowledge of the depravity of the human heart, which is very apt to be puffed up with vain-glory and self-conceit, on the consciousness of having well performed our part in any respect. I cannot forbear transcribing the following practical rules of humility.

"Let them know,—that they must be instructed and taught by you;—that the doctrines of Scripture require subordination in the people to their pastors;—that they should cultivate a humble, modest, and peaceable demeanour;—and that those who have been gloriously bold in the avowal of their faith, should be equally exemplary in all the branches of Christian conduct.—The harder trial yet remains:—the Lord saith, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Let them imitate the Lord, whose humility never shone more than at the eve of his passion, when he washed his disciples' feet. The Apostle Paul too, after repeated sufferings, still continued mild and humble. His elevation to the third heaven begat in him no arrogance; neither, says he, "did we eat any man's bread for nought, but laboured and travailed night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you."

All these duties do you instill into the minds of the brethren: and,—because he, who humbles himself, shall be exalted,—now is the time more particularly that they should fear the snares of the enemy of souls, who loves to attack even the strongest, and to revenge the disgrace which he has already sustained from them. The Lord grant that, in due season, I may be enabled to visit my people again; and to exhort them to useful purpose. For I am grieved to hear that some of them run about idly, foolishly, and insolently; or give themselves up to strife; and even pollute, by fornication, those members which had confessed Christ; and are not willing to be subject to the deacons or presbyters, but seem to act as if they intended,

* It hence appears that a number of them had been released.

† Matthew x. 22.

‡ 2 Thess. iii. 8.

• Epist. 1.

• Epist. 5.

by the bad conduct of a few professors, to bring disgrace on the whole body. He is a true professor indeed, on account of whom the Church need not blush, but glory.

To the point, concerning which certain presbyters wrote to me, I can answer nothing alone; for, from the beginning of my appointment to this See, I determined to do nothing without your consent and the consent of the people. But when, by the favour of God, I shall have returned to you, —we will treat in common of all things.*

In* the next letter he dwells on the same subject, namely, the ill conduct of some of the confessors.—The use of good discipline in the Church of God,—the benefits of orderly subjection in the members,—the danger of pride and self-exaltation; and—the deceitfulness of the human heart, are well stated, and in exceeding strong terms.

After having congratulated his people on the steadiness of their confession, he reminds them of the necessity of perseverance, since faith itself and the new birth conduct us to life eternal, not merely as once received, but as preserved. He reminds them, that the Lord regards him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at his words; —and he rejoices to find that the greatest part of the confessors thus adorned the gospel.—But he had heard that some of them were puffed up: To these he exhibits the mild, charitable, and humble spirit of the Lamb of God: “And dare,” says he, “any one, who now lives by HIM and in HIM, to lift himself up with pride?—He that is least among you, the same shall be great. How execrable ought those immoralities and indecencies to appear among you, which we have heard of with the deepest sorrow of heart!”—He then repeats what he had before mentioned of the lasciviousness of some.

“Contentions and strifes ought to have no place among you, since the Lord has left us his peace. I beseech you abstain from reproaches and abuse;—for he who speaks what is peaceable, and good, and just, according to the precepts of Christ, daily imitates his Lord and Master.—We renounced the world when we were baptized; but now we truly and in deed renounce the world, when, upon being tried and proved by God, we scruple not to give up our own wills; to follow the Lord; and to stand and live in his faith and fear. Let us strengthen one another with mutual exhortations, and strive to grow in the Lord;—that when, in his mercy, he shall give us that peace and tranquillity which he has promised, we may return to the Church as new men;—and that both our brethren and the gentiles may receive us improved in holy conduct; and may admire the excellency of the morals and discipline

of those very Christians, who had astonished them by their fortitude during the persecution.”

The spirit of Cyprian, full of the fear of God, and reflecting, from a comparison of Christian precepts with the practice of professors, how exceedingly his people had provoked the Lord before the persecution, was vehemently incited to stir them up to repentance.—He addresses them from his recess,* as follows.—“Though I am sensible, dearest brethren, that as we all live in the obedient fear of God, you are instant in prayers, yet I also admonish you that we ought to breathe out our souls to God, not only in words, but also in fasting, tears, and every method of supplication. In truth, we must understand and confess that the apostacy which, in so large a degree, has wasted our flock and still wastes it, is the proper consequence of our sins.”

He then goes on to speak of their practical corruptions, as he does in his treatise concerning the lapsed. “And what plagues, what stripes do we not deserve, since even confessors, who ought to be patterns to the rest, are quite disorderly! Hence, while the proud and indecent boasting of their confession puffs up some, torments have come upon us, and torments unremitted;—tedious and most distressing; and so protracted as to exclude even the comfort of death itself!”

“Let us pray with our whole heart for mercy: and if the answer to our prayers be slow, because we have deeply offended;—let us knock; for to him that knocketh it shall be opened, when prayers, groans, and tears beat at the door.—He then records some visions;—which, as they rather suit the dispensation of that age in which miracles were by no means wanting, I pass over.

“Our Master himself prayed for us; because though himself no sinner, yet he bore our sins. And if HE laboured and watched on account of us and of our sins, how much more should we be urgent in prayer? Brethren—let us first treat our Lord himself, and then through him we may obtain favour with God the Father. The Father himself corrects and takes care of us, in the midst of all pressures, provided we remain firm in the faith, and stick close to his Christ;—as it is written, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” None of these can separate believers: Nothing can pluck away those, who adhere closely to his body and blood.—Persecution is the examination and trial of our heart. God would have us to be sifted and tried; nor was ever his help wanting in trials to those who believe. Let our eyes be lifted up to heaven, lest earth with

* Epis. G. ad Rogatianum presbyterum et ceteros confessorum.

* Epis. 7.

his enticements deceive us. If the Lord see us humble and quiet, lovingly united, and corrected by the present tribulation, he will deliver us. Correction has come first; pardon will follow: Let us only continue to pray in steady faith; and to behave like men placed between the ruins of the fallen, and the remains of those who are in fear,—between a multitude of the sick, and the few who have escaped a devouring pestilence.”

The persecution at Carthage, hence, appears to have been very dreadful; but mostly so on account of the number of apostates: The Christian faith, patience, and magnanimity of Cyprian and of a small remnant were in full exercise.

The persecutors endeavoured to lessen the number of Christians by banishing from Carthage all those who confessed Christ: but this not answering their purpose, they proceeded to cruel torments. Cyprian, hearing that some had expired under their sufferings, and that others were still in prison yet alive, wrote to these last a letter of encouragement and consolation. Their limbs had been sorely mangled and torn, so that they appeared like one continued wound; yet they remained firm in the faith and love of Jesus. One of them, Mappalicus, amidst his torments, said to the proconsul, “To-morrow you shall see a contest for a prize.”—He alluded to the crown of martyrdom; and, what he uttered in faith, the Lord fulfilled:—He lost his life in the conflict on the next day.^b

So keenly was the mind of Cyprian fixed on heavenly things; and so completely lifted up above the world, that he ardently exulted and triumphed amidst those scenes of horror. He describes the martyrs and confessors as wiping away the tears of the Church, while he was bewailing the ruins of her sons. He represents even Christ himself as looking down with complacency; fighting and conquering in his servants; and giving strength to believers in proportion to their faith:—“He was present in the contest,” says he, “He encouraged, corroborated, animated his warriors. And he, who once conquered death for us, always conquers in us.” Toward the close of his epistle he consoles, with suitable arguments, those, who had not yet been crowned with martyrdom, but were prepared for it in spirit.

The joy of Cyprian, on account of the faithfulness of the martyrs, was, however, considerably damped by the disorderly conduct, which began to take place in his absence. Those, who had suffered tortures for Christ, and were on the point of martyrdom, and to whom it was usual to make application for the presentation of petitions, wrote to him and requested, that the consideration of the cases of lapsed Christians might be

deferred till the persecution was stopped, and the bishop was restored to his Church. In the mean time, several of these lapsed brethren offered themselves to certain presbyters of Carthage to be received again into communion; and they were actually re-admitted to the Lord's supper without any just evidence of their repentance.—The bishop dissembled not his displeasure on this occasion: He confessed, he had long borne with these disorders for the sake of peace, till he thought it his duty to bear with them no longer.—He said, “that it was quite unprecedented to transact these things without the consent of the bishop:”—and that,—even in lesser offences, a regular time of penitence was enacted of the members;—a certain course of discipline took place,—they made open confession of their sins, and were re-admitted to communion by the imposition of hands of the bishop and his clergy.”—He directs, that the irregular practice might be stopped, till, on his return, every thing should be settled with propriety.

Some of the martyrs themselves, it appears,^c acted very inconsiderately in this business, and gave to lapsed persons recommendatory papers, conceived in general terms. Cyprian wishes them to express the NAMES of the persons, and to give no such recommendations to any but those, of whose sincere repentance they had some good proof; and even in that case to refer the ultimate cognizance of such matters to the bishop.

Every thing has two handles. Cyprian^d has been represented as stretching the episcopal power beyond its due bounds. I see no evidence that he exceeded the powers of his predecessors. A pious care for the good of souls,—not any ambition for the extension of his own authority, seems to influence his mind in these affairs;—but of this, the learned reader must judge for himself, who will take the pains to examine his epistles with attention. Let any man peruse the following letter; and consult his own heart as he goes along, whether it be the language of a tender father of the Church, or of an imperious lord.

CYPRIAN TO THE BROTHERN OF THE LAITY, GREETING.

I know from my own feelings, dearest brethren, that you must grieve, and bitterly bewail over the ruins of our people, as I sincerely do join with you in sad grief and lamentation for every one of them: I experience the truth of what the blessed Apostle said, “Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?” and again, “If one member suffer, all the mem-

^a A further confirmation of the antiquity of the reduced episcopal mode of government in the Church of Christ.

^b Epist. 10.

^c Mosheim—Ecclesiastical History.

^d Epist. 3.

bers suffer with it." I sympathize and console with our brethren, who have lapsed through the violence of persecution: It is true, their wounds give me the most acute pain: they absolutely break my heart; but, divine grace can heal them.—Still I think we should not be in a hurry; nor do any thing incautiously and precipitately; lest, while we rashly re-admit them into communion, the divine displeasure be more grievously incurred. The blessed martyrs have written to us, "begging that their petitions in favour of the lapsed, may be examined, when the Lord shall vouchsafe peace to us, and we shall be able to return to the Church."—Certainly THEN every case shall be examined in your own presence and with the concurrence of your own judgments.—But I hear that some presbyters,—neither mindful of the gospel itself,—nor considering what the martyrs have written to us,—and in contempt of the episcopal authority, have already begun to communicate with the lapsed, and to administer the Lord's supper to them, in defiance of that legitimate order by which alone re-admissions are ever to be regulated. For, if in lesser faults this discipline should be observed, much more ought it in evils, like these, which radically affect Christian profession itself. Our presbyters and deacons are bound to admonish the people in this matter, that they may cherish the sheep intrusted to them, and instruct them in the way of imploring mercy by the divine rules.—I have too good an opinion of the peaceable and humble disposition of our people to believe that they would have ventured to take such a step, had they not been seduced by the adulterary arts of some of the clergy.

Do you, then, take care of each of them; and, by your judgment and moderation, according to the sacred precepts, moderate the spirits of the lapsed: let none pluck off fruit, as yet unripe, with improvident precipitation: let none commit a vessel again to the deep, shattered already and leaky, till it be carefully-refitted: let none put on his tattered garment, till he see it thoroughly repaired.—I beseech THEM also to attend to this advice, and to expect our return;—that when we shall come to you,—by the mercy of God,—we may, with the concurrence of other bishops examine the letters and the petitions of the martyrs in the presence of the confessors according to the will of the Lord."

It is, hence, observable that persons, whose religion had more of form than sincerity, and whose consciences were not altogether seared, acted in the same manner then as such do now;—that is, they were more hasty to gain the good will of men than of their Maker. They were ambitious of the favour of the martyrs of those times, who were unquestionably sound and pious Christians; and we shall see soon still stronger proof, that

even men of eminent godliness are sometimes too apt to repay, with concessions of a dangerous nature, the professions of respect made to them by ambiguous characters. The Lord's supper was then, as it is now, made by some an engine of self-righteous formality. And it is in cases of this nature that wholesome Church-discipline is very precious. The danger of false healing justly appeared great to Cyprian, nor can any thing be conceived more proper than the delay which he directed. Yet as the time was protracted to a more distant period than he expected, and as he was afraid that the sickly season of the hot weather might carry off some of the lapsed, he directs, in a subsequent letter,¹ "that any of the lapsed penitents whose lives might be in danger should, by such Church officers as were authorised, be re-admitted into the Church." And he intreats his clergy to cherish the rest of the fallen Christians with care and tenderness.—He observes that the grace of the Lord would not forsake the humble.

His exhortations to his clergy were not without effect. They fell in with his views, and solicited the people to patience, modesty, and real repentance.—They consulted him how they should act in certain critical cases: He referred them to his former letters; and repeated his ideas of the proper season of settling, in general, the concerns of the lapsed; at the same time he urged the indecency of some persons in expecting a re-admission into the Church before the return of those, who were in exile and were stripped of all their goods for the sake of the gospel. "But, if they are in such excessive hurry," said the bishop, "it is in their own power to obtain even more than they desire. The battle is not yet over; the conflict is daily carrying on. If they cordially repent, and the fire of divine faith burns in their breasts, he who cannot brook a delay, may, if he please, be crowned with martyrdom."

The African prelate was ever studious of preserving an intimate connexion with the Roman Church, where still the persecution raged and prevented the election of a successor to Fabian.

The next epistle is employed in giving them an account of his proceedings.

The bold neglect of discipline in Carthage proved a source of vexation to his mind in addition to his other trials, and called forth all the patience, tenderness, and fortitude of which he was possessed.—Lucian, a confessor of Christ, sincere and fervent in faith, but injudicious, and too little acquainted with Christian precepts, undertook, in the name of the collective body of the confessors, to re-admit into communion all the lapsed who had applied to them;² and he wrote a very

¹ Epist. 12.² Epist. 17.

concise letter to Cyprian, in which he desires him to inform the rest of the bishops of what they have done, and expresses a wish that he may acquiesce in the views of the martyrs.—It cannot be denied,—that, on the one hand, a superstitious veneration for the character of a martyr and a confessor had grown up among these Africans;—and that, on the other,—those, who had suffered for Christ in persecution, were apt to be elated with spiritual pride, and to assume an authority which by no means belonged to them;—so dangerous a thing is it to be unacquainted with Satan's devices;—and so prone in all ages are even professors of true religion to walk in the steps of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.¹

Cyprian sent the copy of this letter to his clergy at Carthage; and prefaced his observations on it, in the following pointed manner; "TO THIS MAN WILL I LOOK," saith the Lord, "EVEN TO HIM THAT IS POOR AND OF A CONTRITE SPIRIT, AND THAT TREMBLETH AT MY WORD. This character becomes us all, particularly those who have fallen, that they may appear before the Lord humble and penitent indeed." He, then, added,—“that the bishops, his brethren, had agreed with him in opinion to defer the consideration of the cases of the lapsed to a council to be held by them in general, after that it should have pleased God to restore peace to his Church;”—and he urged them “to support these views.” He sent them, at the same time, a copy of a correspondence between Caldonius, an African bishop, and himself.

It is not known in what place Caldonius lived, but he, like Cyprian, was very cautious in restoring the lapsed to communion. Some, however, of his Church having apostatized by sacrificing to the pagan gods, were called to a second trial; when they recovered their ground; and, in consequence, were driven into banishment and stripped of their property. Caldonius expressed his opinion that such should be re-admitted. Felix, a presbyter, his wife Victoria, and one Lucius, thus lost their possessions, which were forfeited to the Imperial treasury. A woman also named Bona, who was dragged by her pagan husband to sacrifice, was, while they held her hands, compelled to a seeming compliance, but she fully cleared her integrity by saying, “I did it not,—YE have done it.” She also was banished. Caldonius having stated the facts and given his own opinion, asks the advice of Cyprian, who acquiesces in his judgment; and adds, that he wished all the lapsed, who then caused him so much affliction, were disposed to retrieve their Christian character by these methods, rather than to increase their faults by pride and insolence.²

A confessor, named Celerinus, who lived in some part of Africa,—most probably in banishment,—was much grieved on account of the apostacy of his two sisters, Numeria and Candida. He wept night and day in sackcloth and ashes on their account; and, hearing of Lucian still being in prison and reserved for martyrdom at Carthage, he wrote to him to intreat that either he himself or any of his suffering brethren,—particularly, whosoever should first be called to martyrdom,—would restore them to the Church. He begs the same favour for Etcusa also; who, though she had not sacrificed, had given money to be excused from the act.³ He assures Lucian of the sincerity of their repentance; and says, it was evidenced by their kindness and assiduity in attending on the suffering brethren. He, manifestly, attributes too much to the character of martyrs, in affirming, that “because they were friends and witnesses of Christ, they had therefore a power of indulging all requests of this sort.” This letter and the answer of Lucian contain a mixture of good and evil: they exhibit true grace tarnished with pitiable ignorance, and superstition. Both Celerinus and Lucian were, doubtless, good men;—but we are more disposed to make candid allowances for the defects of our own age than for those of preceding times.

The conduct of Lucian affords a memorable and lamentable instance of the weakness of human nature even in a regenerate spirit. His answer to Celerinus⁴ displays the most consummate fortitude,—and this,—as far as appears—grounded, in the main, on the true faith and love of Christ. The existence of a deplorable and subtle spirit of pride, in some degree, is, perhaps, not to be denied; but this holy man was, certainly, not aware of the alloy.—He describes himself and his companions as shut up in two cells, and excessively squeezed, and oppressed with hunger, thirst, and intolerable heat. He mentions a number of them as already killed in prison; and adds that, in a few days, he himself must expire. “For five days,” says he, “we have received very little bread; and the water is apportioned to us by measure.”—Such were the sufferings of this persecution.—Lucian speaks of all this in a cool, and most unaffected manner;—like one, whose mind was lifted up above the world and its utmost malice, and patiently expected a blessed immortality. As to the petition of Celerinus in favour of his sisters, he informs him that Paul the martyr who had lately suffered, had visited him WHILE YET IN THE BODY, and had said,—“Lucian, I say to thee before Christ, that if any person after my decease beg of you to be restored to the Church, do you, in my name, grant his

¹ Epis. 15. ² See Numbers xvi. ³ Epis. 18, 19.

⁴ Epis. 20.

⁵ Epis. 21.

request. Lucian extends this generosity to the greatest height; and refers him to the general letter, which he had already written in behalf of the lapsed. Yet, he owns they ought to explain their cause before the bishop, and make a confession. It is very plain, however, that he attributes, in this matter, a sort of superior dignity to Paul, to himself, and to the other martyrs: and, no doubt, the vain-glory of martyrdom was much augmented by the excessive regard which now began to be paid to sufferers.—These and similar facts constrain the reluctant historian to acknowledge, that the corruptions of superstition, in regard to the immoderate honours paid to saints and martyrs, which afterwards, through Satan's artifice and delusion, grew to the enormous pitch of idolatry itself, had ALREADY entered the Church, and contaminated the simplicity and the purity of Christian faith and dependence. Yet this concession,—it must be remembered,—implies no suspicion of hypocrisy either in the martyrs or in their admirers. This same Lucian was a man of true, of substantial piety. He wept and lamented exceedingly on account of the lapsed women; and had the fear of God constantly before his eyes. Probably, he was not very judicious: his letter is confused and perplexed beyond measure; nor is it now easy to say, how far the obscurity is to be ascribed to the want of a clear understanding, or to his very distressed circumstances, or to the corruption of the text.

It is evident that a spirit extremely dangerous to the cause of piety, humility, and wholesome discipline, was spreading fast in the African Church. Celerinus himself, who had been a confessor,* owns that the cause of his sister had been heard by the clergy of her Church,—at that time it seems, destitute of a bishop;—who had deferred the settlement of it till the appointment of the chief pastor;—but the precipitation of men would brook no delay.

The eyes of all prudent and more discerning persons in the Church were fixed on the bishop of Carthage in this emergency. The danger of the loss of the gospel itself, by substituting a dependence on saints instead of Christ Jesus, forcibly struck his mind. His connexion with the Roman clergy, and the superior regard to discipline which there prevailed, was of some service on the occasion; and, in his correspondence with them, he compares the immoderate assuming conduct of Lucian with the modesty of the martyrs Mappalicus and Saturninus; who had abstained from such practices: The former had

written only in behalf of his own mother and sister; and the latter, who had been tortured and imprisoned, had yet sent out no letters whatever of this kind. Lucian, he complains, every where furnished the lapsed with letters testimonial for their reception into the Church, written with his own hand in the name of Paul while alive, continued to furnish them after his death, and declared that that martyr had directed him to do so;—though he should have known, says Cyprian, that he ought to obey the Lord rather than his fellow-servant.

A young person, named Aurelius, who had suffered torments, was seized with the same vanity, but was unable to write; and Lucian wrote many papers in his name.

Cyprian complains of the odium thus incurred by the bishops. In some cities he takes notice how the multitude had forced the bishops to re-admit the lapsed; but he blames those rulers of the Church for want of faith and Christian constancy. In his own diocese he had occasion for all his fortitude. Some, who were formerly turbulent, were now much more so, and insisted on their speedy re-admission. He observes that baptism is performed in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that remission of past sins is then received; and then he complains that the name of Paul, in effect, is inserted in the place of the Trinity. He applies, on this occasion, St. Paul's well-known holy execration denounced in the beginning of the Epistles to the Galatians. He owns his obligation to Rome for the letters of their clergy, which were well calculated to withstand these abuses.

He[†] wrote a congratulatory letter to the confessors Moyses and Maximus, whose faith and zeal, united with modesty and with the strictest attention to discipline he had formerly much commended; and he now thanks them for the epistolary advice, which they had given to the African confessors. In their answer[‡] they appear transported with holy joy; and elevated with the heavenly prospects before them. They quote the New Testament Scriptures relative[§] to these things; and express such strength of faith, hope, and charity, as demonstrates the real power of divine grace to have been possessed by them in a very eminent manner. Their love of the divine word and of just discipline appear no less great than their zeal and ardour for martyrdom. They observe how deeply and how widely spread the evil of defection had been; and they conclude with very just observations on the right method of treating the lapsed, in perfect agreement with Cyprian. Greatness of mind, a high sense of the importance of order, a he-

* By a confessor in the language of those times, we are always to understand a person, who has publicly professed or confessed himself to be a Christian, when called upon by the heathens to sacrifice to their gods, or otherwise to worship them.

• Epis. 22.

† Epis. 24.

‡ Mat. v. 10, 11. Luke vi. 22. Mat. x. 18. Rom. viii. 35.

§ Epis. 25.

very warmth of temper, and an accuracy of judgment are equally and abundantly evident in this epistle:—such endowments existing in just proportion prove that the work of the Holy Spirit was very sound in these excellent men.

Cyprian now wrote to the lapsed themselves; and rebuked the precipitation of some, and exposed the injustice of their claims, since they acted as if they took to themselves the whole title of the Church: he commended the modesty of others, who refused to take advantage of the indiscreet recommendation of the martyrs, and who wrote to him in the language of penitents;—whence it appears that the folly of the lapsed was by no means universal.*

Gaius Diddensis, one of the presbyters of Cyprian, undertook, along with his deacon, against the sense of the rest of the clergy, to communicate with the lapsed. Repeated admonitions availed not to a reformation. As the bishop was sensible that the common people, for whose salvation he was solicitous, were deceived by these things, he commends his clergy for refusing communion with so obstinate and irregular a presbyter and deacon.—He again intimates his intention of judging all things in full council upon his return; and intreats them to co-operate, in the mean time, with his views in the maintenance of discipline. In writing again to the Roman clergy he declares his determination of acting as God had directed his ministers in the gospel, if the contumacious were not reformed by his and by their admonitions.†

The Roman clergy, condole affectionately with Cyprian;—"Our sorrow," say they, "is doubled, because you have no rest from these pressing difficulties of the persecution; and because the immoderate petulance of the lapsed has proceeded to the height of arrogance. But, though these things have grievously afflicted our spirits; yet your firmness and evangelical strictness of discipline have moderated the load of vexation: You have both restrained the wickedness of certain persons; and also, by exhorting them to repentance, have shewn them the wholesome way to salvation.—We are astonished that they should proceed to such lengths, in a time so mournful, so unseasonable as the present;—that they should not so much as ask for re-communication with the Church; but claim it as a right;—and even affirm that they are already forgiven in heaven." They then confute such absurd claims with pertinent arguments:—and proceed, in the spirit of charity, to say,—“Never cease, brother,—in your love of souls,—to moderate and restrain these violent spirits; and to offer the medicine of truth to the erroneous, though the inclination of the sick be often opposite

to the prudent industry of the physician: These wounds of the lapsed are fresh and produce considerable tumours; but we feel assured, that, in process of time, their heat and violence will subside;—and the patients themselves will then be thankful for that delay, which was absolutely necessary for a wholesome cure, provided there be some to arm them with weapons against themselves; and, by perverse instructions, to demand for them the deadly poison of an over-hasty restoration: for we cannot think that they would all have dared to have claimed their admission so petulently without the encouragement of some persons of ecclesiastical influence. We know the faith, the institution, the humility of the Carthaginian Church;—whence we have been surprised in noticing certain harsh reflections made against you in a certain epistle, when we have formerly had repeated proof of your mutual charity.”

They proceed to give the most wholesome advice to the lapsed; and, in truth the whole conduct of the Roman clergy, at this season, reflects the highest honour on their wisdom and their affection; and affords the most pleasing proofs of the good state of that Church at that time. The same can by no means be said of Cyprian's: They were,—as we have seen,—a declining people before his appointment to the See; and the scourge of persecution produced vast numbers of apostates.—In those days of discipline the lapsed, by their eagerness for re-admission, shewed the same dispositions of selfishness and of pride, which, in our times, are evinced by wishing to hear nothing but comfort preached to them,—by finding fault with ministers who dare not speak false peace;—and by unsoundly healing themselves.—We are perfectly lax in point of discipline:—Who regards its menaces against the disorderly?—With the first Christians this was an awful concern.—The same depravity of nature seems now to work on corrupt minds in another way; but so as still to exercise the patience and fortitude of godly ministers; who, by persevering in their duty and not giving way to the unreasonable humours of their people in things of importance, will find, in the end, a wholesome issue even with many of their most unpromising and froward hearers.

An African, named Privatus, who had left his country and travelled to Rome, solicited to be there received as a Christian. Cyprian had mentioned him to the Roman clergy, and pointed out his real and dangerous character. In the close of this admirable letter they inform him that, before they had received his cautionary letters, they had detected the impostor. At the same

* They must have understood that by much the major part at least of the lapsed were guilty of this evil.
† Epi. 29.

time they lay down a golden maxim, "that we all ought to watch for the body of the whole Church, diffused through various provinces."—It was this unity and uniformity of the Christian Church which, hitherto, had preserved it, under God, from the infection of heresies. None of these were yet able to mix themselves with the "body of Christ;"¹ and the Church, instead of being broken into small handfuls of distinct sets of persons, all glorying in having something peculiarly excellent, and prone to despise their neighbours,—as yet knew no other name than that of CHRISTIAN: numbers and diversity of place alone prevented their assembling all together; for they were one people. In Italy and Africa the union at this time appears very salubrious: and the vigorous spirit and sound understanding of Cyprian was enabled to apply the solid graces of the Roman Church as a medicine for the reformation of his own disordered flock.

The Roman clergy, in a second letter, take notice of St. Paul's eulogium of their Church in the beginning of his epistle;—"that their faith was spoken of through the whole world," and they express their desire of treading in the steps of their Christian predecessors. They mention the cases of Libellatici, which were two-fold; 1st, Of those who delivered in written testimonials to heathen magistrates, in which they abjured the gospel; and who, at the same time, by paying money, obtained the privilege of not sacrificing to the gods.—2dly, Of those who procured friends to do these same things for them. Both kinds,—these last, as well as those, who had actually sacrificed, were censured by the Roman clergy as lapsed persons. They mention likewise the letters sent by the Roman confessors into Africa to the same purport, and express their joy on account of the consistency of their conduct in matters of discipline with their sufferings for the faith. They declare their agreement, in opinion with Cyprian,—to defer the settlement of these affairs till some general measure could be planned for this purpose, after peace should be restored. "Behold," say they, "almost the whole world is laid waste:—Fragments of the fallen lie in every place:—With one and the same counsel, with unanimous prayers and tears, let us,—who seem hitherto to have escaped the ruins of this visitation, as well as those, who have not stood entirely faithful during the persecution, intreat the Divine Majesty, and beg peace in the name of the whole Church: let us cher-

ish, guard, and arm one another with mutual prayers: let us supplicate for the lapsed, that they may be raised: let us pray for those who do stand, that they may not be tempted to their ruin; let us pray also, that those, who have fallen, may become sensible of the greatness of the crime, and may have the wisdom not to wish for a crude and momentary medicine, and that they may not disturb the yet fluctuating state of the Church,—lest they should appear to aggravate our distresses by exciting INTERNALLY seditious and inflammatory commotions.—Let them knock at the doors, but not break them.—Let them go to the threshold of the Church, but not leap over it. Let them watch at the gates of the heavenly camp, but with that modesty which becomes those who remember they have been deserters. Let them arm themselves indeed with the weapons of humility, and resume that shield of faith which they dropped through the fear of death; but so that they may be armed against the devil,—not against that very Church, which laments over their fall."

The want of a bishop at Rome was an additional reason for delay. They speak of certain bishops who lived in their neighbourhood, and also of others, who, through the flame of persecution, had fled to them from distant provinces,—who all concurred in the same views.

There was a very young man, named Aurelius, whom Cyprian speaks of as greatly excelling in the graces of Christianity. He had twice undergone the rage of persecution for the sake of Christ: Banishment was his first punishment, and torture the second. The bishop had ordained this youth a reader in the Church of Carthage; and he apologises on account of the peculiar circumstances of the case and of the times, for his not having previously consulted his presbyters and deacons. He beseeches them to pray, that both their bishop and good Aurelius may be restored to the exercise of their respective functions.—I cannot but hence observe, how exact and orderly the ideas of ordination were in those times.—It is not to the advantage of godliness among us, that persons can now be introduced to very high offices in the ministry without much previous trial, ceremony or difficulty.^a

Celerinus was also ordained a reader by the same^b authority. However weak in judgment he may appear from the transactions between him and Lucian already stated, the man suffered with great zeal for the sake of Christ. The very beginning of the persecution found him a ready combatant. For nineteen days he had remained in prison fettered and starved; but he persevered and escaped at length without martyrdom. His grandfather and two of his uncles had suffer-

^a Coloa. i. 24. His body's sake, which is the Church.

^b Epia. 30.

^c So called from Libellus,—which here means a concise written document, signed by the person whom it concerned, and containing an account of his religion: In many cases, it was only signed by some creditable and well known friend.—An evasive contrivance—for the purpose of quieting insincere consciences, not yet quite hardened!

^d Epia. 53.

^e Epia. 54.

ed for Christ, and their anniversaries were celebrated by the Church.

It seems, that Cyprian thought proper to reward with honourable establishments in the Church those who had suffered with the greatest faithfulness in the persecution, which was now drawing to a close. Numidicus was advanced to the office of presbyter. He had attended a great number of martyrs who were murdered, partly with stones, and partly by fire. His wife, sticking close by his side, was burnt to death with the rest: He himself, half burnt, buried with stones and left for dead, was found afterwards by his daughter; and, through her care, he recovered. Probably, this last case was the effect of the tumultuary rage of a persecuting populace: The ferocity of many in those times did not permit them to wait for legal orders. —Who can tell the number of Christian sufferers, which this mode of oppression must have added to the list of martyrs?

Amidst all these cares the charity and diligence of Cyprian toward his flock was unremitted. The reader who loves the annals of genuine and active godliness will not be wearied in seeing still fresh proofs of it in extracts of two letters to his clergy.⁴

"Dear brethren, I salute you: By the grace of God, I am still safe; and I wish to come soon to you;—that our mutual desire, and that of all the brethren may be gratified. Whenever, on the settlement of your affairs, you shall write to me that I ought to come, or, if the Lord should condescend to make it plain to me before, then I will come to you; for where can I have more happiness and joy, than there, where God appointed me both first to become a believer, and also to grow in faith. I beseech you, take diligent care of the widows, of the sick, and of all the poor; and supply also strangers, if any be indigent, with what is needful for them, out of my proper portion which I left with Rogatian the presbyter. And lest that should, by this time, be all spent, I have sent by Naricus the Acolyth,⁵ another sum of money to the same presbyter, that you may the more readily and largely supply the distressed.

Though you have been frequently admonished by my letters to shew all care for those, who have gloriously confessed the Lord and are in prison, yet I must repeatedly intreat your attention to the same thing. I wish circumstances would permit my presence among you: With the greatest pleasure and readiness would I discharge these solemn duties of love and affection towards our brethren. But—Do you represent me.—A decent care for the interment, not only of those who died in torture, but also of such as died

under the pressures of confinement, is necessary. For, whoever hath submitted himself to torture and to death under the eye of God, hath already suffered all that God would have him to suffer.—Mark also the days in which they depart this life, that we may celebrate their commemoration among the memorials of the martyrs:—though our most faithful and devoted friend Tertullus,—who, agreeably to his usual exactness and care, attends to their obsequies,—hath written, still writes to me, and signifies the days in which the blessed martyrs are transmitted to immortality.—Their memorials are here celebrated, and I hope shortly, under divine providence, to be able to celebrate them with you. Let not your care and diligence be wanting for the poor, who have stood firm in the faith, and have fought with us in the Christian warfare. Our affectionate care and attention to them are the more requisite, because neither poverty nor persecution have driven them from the love of Christ."

Every one knows into what idolatry these commemorations of martyrs afterwards degenerated.—But I observe few or no signs of it in the days of Cyprian.

In addition to other evils the providence of God now thought fit to exercise the mind of Cyprian with one of the most distressing calamities, which can happen to a lover of peace and charity,—the rise of a schism.

There existed in the Church of Carthage a person of a very exceptionable character, named Felicissimus, who had long been a secret enemy of the bishop. By the same artifices and blandishments, which seditious persons make use of in all ages, this man had enticed some of the flock to himself; and he held communion with them on a certain mountain. Among these and in their neighbourhood, their arrived several discreet brethren, who were authorized by Cyprian to discharge the debts of poor Christians; and to furnish them with small sums of money to begin business again; and also to make a report of their ages, conditions, and qualities, that he might select such of them for ecclesiastical offices, as should be judged properly qualified. Felicissimus opposed and thwarted both these designs. Several of the poor, who came first to be relieved, were threatened by him with imperious severity, because they refused to communicate on the mountain. This man growing more insolent, and taking advantage of Cyprian's absence,—whose return he speedily expected because the persecution had nearly ceased at Carthage,—raised an opposition against the bishop in roam,—found means to unite a considerable party to himself,—and threatened all those persons, who did not choose to partake in the sedition.—Among other

⁴ Epist. 33.

⁵ Epist. 36, 37.

⁶ An inferior officer of the Church, signifying an attendant.

⁷ Epist. 38.

crimes this sower of discord had been guilty of adultery; and he now saw no method of preventing an infamous excommunication, but that of setting up himself as a leader.—His second in this odious business was named Augendus; who did his utmost to promote the same views.—Cyprian, by letter, expressed his vehement sorrow on account of these evils, promised to take full cognizance of them on his return, and in the mean time he wrote to his clergy to suspend from communion Felicissimus and his abettors.—His clergy wrote to him in answer, that they had suspended the chiefs of the faction accordingly.⁸

In the mean time there were not wanting upright and zealous ministers, who instructed the people at Carthage. Among these were distinguished Britius the presbyter, also Rogatian and Numidicus, confessors; and some deacons of real godliness. These warned their flocks of the evils of schism, and endeavoured to preserve peace and unity, and to recover the lapsed by wholesome methods. In addition to their labours Cyprian wrote now to the people themselves.⁹ “For,” says he, “the malice and perfidy of some presbyters hath effected, that I should not be able to come to you before Easter.¹ But the source of the faction of Felicissimus is now discovered, and we are acquainted with the foundation on which it stands. His followers encouraged certain confessors, that they should not harmonize with their bishop, nor observe ecclesiastical discipline faithfully and modestly. And as if it were too little for them to have corrupted the minds of confessors, and to have armed them against their pastor, and to have stained the glory of their confession, they turned themselves to poison the spirits of the lapsed, to keep them from the great duty of constant prayer, and to invite them to an unsound and dangerous re-admission. But I beseech you, brethren, watch against the snares of the devil: Be on your guard and “work out your own salvation:” this is a second and a different sort of persecution and temptation. The five seditious presbyters may be justly compared to the five pagan rulers, who lately, in conjunction with the magistrates, published some plausible arguments with a view of subverting souls. The same method is now tried, for the ruin of your souls, by the five presbyters with Felicissimus at their head: They teach you,—that you need not petition;—that he who hath denied Christ, may cease to supplicate the same Christ whom he hath denied;—that repentance is not necessary;—and in short, that every thing should be conducted in a novel manner and contrary to the rules of the gospel.

My banishment of two years, and my mournful separation from your presence; my constant grief and perpetual lamentation; and my tears flowing day and night, because the pastor whom you chose with so much love and zeal could not salute nor embrace you,—all this, it seems, was not a sufficient accumulation of sorrow.—To my distressed and exhausted spirit a still greater evil must be added,—that in so great a solicitude I cannot, with propriety, come over to you. The threats and snares of the perfidious, oblige me to use caution; lest, on my arrival, the tumult should increase: and lest I myself, the bishop, who ought to provide in all things for peace and tranquillity, should seem to have afforded matter for sedition, and again to exasperate the miseries of the persecution. Most dear brethren, I beseech you do not give rash credit to the pernicious representations of those who put darkness for light: They speak, but not from the word of the Lord: They promise to restore the lapsed, who are themselves separated from the Church.

There is one God, one Christ, one Church. Depart, I pray you, far from these men, and avoid their discourse, as a plague and pestilence. They hinder your prayers and tears by affording you false consolations. Acquiesce, I beseech you, in my counsel: I pray daily for you, and desire you to be restored to the Church by the grace of the Lord.—Join your prayers and tears with mine. But, if any person shall despise repentance, and betake himself to Felicissimus and to his faction, let him know that his re-admission into the Church will be impracticable.”

It is not possible, by a few extracts, to give a perfect idea of the glowing charity, which reigned in Cyprian's breast on this occasion. Whoever has attended to the insincerity of human nature, ever prone to consult ease, to humour selfish feelings, and to admit flattery, will see the difficult trials of patience, which faithful pastors, in all ages, have endured from the insidious arts of those who would heal the wounds of people falsely.—Uncharitable—and, imperious—are the usual epithets with which they are assailed on account of their faithfulness.—But “Wisdom is justified of her children.”

But there was also another character, who was a primary agent in these disagreeable scenes,—Novatus, a presbyter of Carthage, a man extremely scandalous and immoral.² His domestic crimes had been so notorious as to render him not only no longer fit to be a minister, but even unworthy to be received into lay-communication. The examination of his conduct was about to take place, when the breaking out of the persecution by Decius prevented it. He it was, who support

⁸ Epis. 39.

⁹ Epis. 40.

¹ In what way they hindered his arriving sooner will appear afterwards.

² Epis. 49.

ed and cherished the views of Felicissimus and of the rest; and he appears, by his address and capacity, to have been extremely well qualified to produce much mischief in the Church. He could do it no service; because he was absolutely devoid both of honesty and conscience.—Felicissimus himself, though at first the ostensible leader of the congregation on the mountain, gave way afterwards to one of the five presbyters, named Fortunatus, who was constituted bishop in opposition to Cyprian. Most of the five had been already branded with infamy for immoralities. Yet so deep is the corruption of human nature,—that such characters usually find advocates to espouse them, even where the light of the gospel shines, and where there exist pastors of eminent sanctity. The fact is, pastors of this last description cause numerous enemies to themselves by irritating the corruptions of wicked men, which they constantly do by refusing to speak peace where there is no peace.—It is no slight proof of the strength of these evils, that even a persecution the most dreadful yet recorded in the annals of the Church, did not perfectly unite Christian professors in love. The pious reader will, hence, infer the necessity, which called for so severe a scourge to the Church; and will also remark the advantages thence accruing to the really faithful, either by happily removing them to rest out of a world of sin and vanity, or by promoting their sanctification, if their pilgrimage be prolonged.

Novatus, either unwilling to face the bishop of Carthage, or desirous to extend the mischiefs of schism, passed the sea and came to Rome. There he connected himself with a priest, named Novatian, a friend of the confessor Moses, who has been already mentioned, and whose sufferings at Rome were of a tedious nature. Novatus had the address and management to effect the separation of Novatian from the Church.—Moses renounced all intercourse with his former friend and acquaintance on account of this conduct; and soon after died in prison where he had been confined nearly a year. Doubtless, he entered into eternal glory at length, having left the evidence of modesty and peaceableness in addition to his other more splendid virtues, as testimonies of his love to the Lord Jesus.

Novatus found the religious ideas of his new associate and partner arranged in extreme opposition to his own. Novatian had been a stoic before he was a Christian; and he still retained the rigour of the sect to such a degree, that he disapproved of receiving those into the Church who once had lapsed, though they gave the sincerest marks of repentance. Full of these unwarranted severities, he exclaimed against the wise and well tempered lenity of the Roman clergy in receiv-

ing penitents. Many of the clergy of Rome, who were still in prison for the faith;—and among these Maximus and others, to whom Cyprian had formerly written,—were seduced by this apparent zeal for Church-discipline; and they joined Novatian. His African tutor, with astonishing inconsistency, after having stirred up a general indignation in his own country and against his own bishop on account of severity to the lapsed, now supported a party who complained of too much lenity at Rome. It is hard to say which of the two extremes is the worse:—Novatus defended both within the compass of two years;—and with equal pertinacity.

The Roman clergy thought it high time to stem the torrent. They had, for sixteen months,¹ with singular piety and fortitude governed the Church during one of its most stormy seasons. Schism was now added to persecution: The necessity of choosing a bishop grew more and more urgent; yet a bishop of Rome must, of course, be in the most imminent danger of martyrdom;—for Decius threatened all bishops with great haughtiness and asperity. Sixteen of them happened to be then at Rome, and these ordained Cornelius as the successor of Fabian. He was very unwilling to accept the office; but the people, who were present, approved of his ordination; and no step was to be neglected, which might be useful in withstanding the growing schism.—The life of Cornelius appears to have been worthy of the gospel: Novatian, however, not only vented many calumnies against him, but also contrived, in a very irregular manner,² to be elected bishop in opposition.

Thus was formed the first body of Christians, who, in modern language, may be called *DISSENTERS*; that is, men, who separate from the general Church, not on grounds of doctrine, but of discipline. The Novatianists held no opinions contrary to the faith of the gospel. It is certain from some writings of Novatian extant,³ that their leader was sound in the doctrine of the Trinity. But the confessors, whom his pretensions to superior⁴ purity had seduced, returned afterwards to the communion of Cornelius, and mourned over their own credulity. In a letter of Cornelius to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, a few circumstances are occasionally mentioned from which an idea of the state of the Church of Rome, at that time, may be collected.⁵ There were under the bishop forty-six priests, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolyths, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and porters, and upwards of fifteen hundred widows,

¹ Fleury, B. 6.

² See in Euseb. B. 6. Cornelius's letter concerning Novatian whom Eusebius confounds with Novatus by mistake.

³ See Waterland's Importance of the Trinity.

⁴ Epia. 48 and 49.

⁵ About the middle of the third century.

and infirm or disabled persons.—“The number of the laity was,” says he, “innumerable.”—I don’t know so authentic a memorial of the numbers of the Christians in those times.

In his letter he charges Novatian,—perhaps without sufficient warrant,—with having denied himself to be a priest during the heat of the persecution, and with obliging his separatists, when he administered to them the Lord’s supper, to swear to adhere to himself.—The party, however, at Rome daily lost ground: Nicostratus the deacon was among the very few persons of note there who, after being seduced by the arts of Novatian, did not return into communion and peace with Cornelius.—Conscious of scandalous crimes,¹ this schismatic fled from Rome into Africa;—whither Novatus himself also returned: and there the Novatians found many adherents, and are said to have elected for themselves, as a sort of counter-bishop, a presbyter, named Maximus, who had been, lately, sent as deputy from Rome by Novatian, to inform Cyprian of the new election² in opposition to that of Cornelius.—This same deputy Cyprian had rejected from communion.

It would not have been worth while to have detailed these events so distinctly, but for the purpose of marking the symptoms of declension in the Church,—the unity of which was now broken for the first time: for it ought not to be concluded that all the Novatians were men void of the faith and love of Jesus. The artifices of Satan also, in pushing forward opposite extremes, are worthy of notice: The skilful tempter tries both the lax and the severe method of discipline. The former he finds more suitable to the state of Christianity in our times; but it could gain no solid footing in the third century. The Novatian schism stood at last on the ground of excessive severity;—a certain proof of the strictness of the ecclesiastical government then fashionable among Christians, and, of course, of great purity of life and doctrine having been prevalent among them: To refuse the re-admission of penitents was a dangerous instance of pharisaical pride: but, in justice to Novatian, it ought to be mentioned, that he advised the exhorting of the lapsed to repentance, though, he thought, that they should then be left to the judgment of God. On the same plan he also condemned second marriages:—Extreme austerity and superstition were growing evils in this century; and they were cherished by false philosophy.

At length, Cyprian ventured out of his retreat and returned to Carthage. In what manner he there conducted himself shall be the subject the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

CYPRIAN’S SETTLEMENT OF HIS CHURCH AFTER HIS RETURN, AND THE HISTORY OF THE WESTERN CHURCH TILL THE PERSECUTION UNDER GALLUS.

THE prudence of Cyprian had been so remarkable during the whole of the persecution of Decius, that we may fairly conclude he had ceased to apprehend any personal danger when he appeared again in public at Carthage. In fact, it was not the cessation of malice, but the distraction of public affairs, which put an end to this persecution. Decius, on account of the incursion of the Goths, was obliged to leave Rome; and God gave a respite to his servants, while men of the world were wholly taken up with resisting or mourning under their secular calamities.—After Easter a council was held at Carthage, and the eyes of Christians were turned toward it: The Church was in a very confused state; and some settlement of it was expected under the auspices of Cyprian and the other bishops of Africa. At first, a short delay was occasioned on account of doubts which arose respecting the validity of the election of Cornelius.³ But an exact information of the circumstances laid open the truth: the regularity of his appointment and the violation of order in the schismatical ordination of Novatian, by some persons who were in a state of intoxication appeared so clearly that no room for hesitation was left: Novatian was rejected in the African synod;—Felicissimus, with his five presbyters, was condemned; and Cornelius was owned as legitimate bishop of Rome.—And now the case of the lapsed, which had given so much disquietude, and which Cyprian had so often promised to settle in full council, was finally determined:—and with men, who feared God, it was no hard thing to adjust a due medium.—A proper temperature was used between the precipitation of the lapsed and the stoical severity of Novatian. Hence, tried penitents were restored, and the case of dubious characters was deferred; and yet every method of Christian charity was used to bring about and facilitate their repentance and re-admission.

Fortunatus preserved still a schismatical assembly. But both this bishop and his flock shrunk soon into insignificance. The Christian authority of Cyprian was restored. The Novatian party alone remained a long time after, in Africa and elsewhere, numerous enough to continue a distinct body of professing Christians. The very little satisfactory light, which Christian annals af-

¹ The Novatians called themselves Cathari, pure people.
² The election of Novatian.

³ See Cornelius’s letter in Euseb.

ford concerning these dissenters, shall be given in its place. And, as I am convinced that the Almighty has not limited his creatures to any particular and strictly defined modes of Church-government, I cannot be under much temptation to partiality.—The laws, indeed, of historical truth have obliged me to state facts which prove their secession to have been unjustifiable; but that circumstance does not render it impossible that the Spirit of God might be with some of this people during their continuance as a distinct body of Christians.

Thus did it please God to make use of the vigour and perseverance of Cyprian in recovering the Church of Carthage from a state of most deplorable declension. First, she had lost her purity and piety to a very alarming degree; then, she was torn with persecution, and sifted by the storm so much that the greatest part of her professors apostatized; and, lastly, she was convulsed by schisms, through men's unwillingness to submit to the rules of God's own word in wholesome discipline and sincere repentance. On Cyprian's return, however, a new train of regulation was established by the council of Carthage; and unity was restored in a great measure: The accounts of the succeeding transactions are imperfect; but there is great reason to believe that the Church of God was much recovered in these parts.

Decius lost his life in battle in the year two hundred and fifty-one, after having reigned thirty months.—A prince—neither deficient in abilities nor in moral virtues, but distinguished, during this whole period, by the most cruel persecution of the Church of God; he appears to have been bent on its ruin; but was stopped in his career by an over-ruling providence.

The Church were now allowed peace for a little time under Gallus, the successor of Decius.

There remain a few circumstances to be observed, which attended this persecution in the West, before we proceed to relate its effects in the Eastern Church.

Cyprian, zealous for the unity of the Church, informed Cornelius, 'that certain persons came to Carthage from Novatian, who insisted on being heard as to some charges which they had to produce against Cornelius.—But,—that as sufficient and ample testimony had already been given in favour of Cornelius,—as a prudent delay had also been made,—and as the sense of the Church of Rome had been authentically exhibited, my further audience of the NOVATIANS had been refused.—These, he observes, strove then to make a party in Africa; and for this purpose solicited different towns and private houses. The council of Carthage informed

them that they ought to desist from their obstinacy, and not to relinquish their mother Church; but to own, that a bishop being once constituted and approved by the testimony and judgment of his colleagues and of the people, another could not be lawfully set up in his room: and, that therefore,—if they intended to act peaceably and faithfully,—if they pretended to be the assertors of the gospel of Christ, they ought to return to the Church.

Though the ideas contained in this epistle may appear very repugnant to the habits of thinking contracted by many professors of godliness in our days, I see not, I own, on what principles they can be controverted. There is a medium between the despotism of idolatrous Rome and the extreme licentiousness of modern ecclesiastical polity.—Are not peace and unity precious things?—and ought not they to be preserved in the Church if possible?—Then why should not the decided sense of the majority prevail, where that mode of evangelically settling a Church has been usual, and where it is not contrary to the established laws of the country,—and lastly, where pastors sound in faith and decorous in manners have been appointed?—Can it be right for a small number of individuals to dissent—and that, on no better ground, than their own fancy and humour?" This is not keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.—Such, however, was the first origin of the Novatian schism.

Persons, who have been accustomed to approve the unrestrained, and unscriptural manner of conducting religious communities, which now so unhappily prevails, who feel no pity for the Church of Christ, nor care how much her members be torn one from another, and who make no more difficulty of changing their pastors than their workmen, will not enter into the beauty of Cyprian's charitable concern for the unity of the Church. It is evident, union at Rome was as much on his heart as UNION at Carthage, because he

* The author would, by no means, be understood here to encroach on the right of private judgment; but he laments sincerely that the evil of separation should have been considered by the NOVATIANS as a trifling matter; and he, further, laments, that a spirit of the same kind should appear to prevail strongly in our own days.—Does, then, right and wrong,—will any one say,—depend upon numbers?—Have not the FEW as undoubted a right to their own opinions as the MANY?—Such questions are often asked,—and with an air of triumph.—But, after all,—whoever denied this right of opinion,—this right to think?—It is the right of ACTING according to this right of opinion that is contested.—Let a man, for example, in his private judgment prefer for his pastor or bishop some person different from him who has been elected by the majority.—let him publicly shew this preference at the time of giving his suffrage;—but let him remember to acquiesce peaceably in the appointment of the person elected; and not endeavour to divide the Church of Christ by placing a rejected candidate or some other favourite at the head of a faction in opposition to the election of,—perhaps,—a truly godly and religious man.

But in all this the author supposes either the *Lex scripta* or the *Lex non scripta* of the country to authorise ecclesiastical appointments by election.

considered Christ's BODY as one. He explains^{*} to Cornelius why he was not immediately acknowledged as bishop, and how he was honourably received on full information. He speaks of the Roman schism with horror; he represents the Christian schismatics, as refusing the bosom and the embrace of their mother, and as setting up an adulterous head out of the Church. I attempt not to vindicate expressions which go to the length of a total condemnation of the persons of schismatics: Schism is not so deadly an evil as heresy; nor must we undertake to judge the HEARTS of others. But when all this is allowed,—Does not the zeal of Cyprian call for similar candour?—The mischief, which had just begun to shew itself in Rome and Carthage, was then NEW in the Christian world. Before the time of this able and active prelate no instance had happened of any separations made from the Church, except in the case of damnable heresies: Slight and tolerable inconveniences had not yet been thought sufficient reasons to justify such violent measures;—and, it must be owned, if really good men in all ages had possessed the same conscientious dread of the sin of Schism, it would have fared much better with vital Christianity; and, further, those separations which must of necessity be made, when false worship and false doctrine are prevalent, would have been treated with more respect in the world.

Encouraged with the success of his pacific labours at home, Cyprian endeavoured to heal the breaches of the Roman Christians. He was sensible that the example of the confessors, whom Novatian's appearance of superior piety in discipline had seduced, had been attended with a great defection. He wrote respectfully to his former correspondents, and assured them that the deepest sadness had possessed his breast on their account: he reminds them of the honour of their faithful sufferings: he intreats them to return to the Church; and points out the inconsistency of their glorious confession of Christ with their present irregularity. But so exactly attentive was Cyprian to order, that he first sent the letter to Cornelius, and ordered it to be read to him, and submitted to his consideration before he would suffer it to be sent to the confessors.[†] With the same cautious charity he explains again to Cornelius some things which had given umbrage to that prelate with respect to the delay of the acknowledgment of his ordination.[‡] These transactions appear to me to belong to my plan; and to be singularly instructive.—The conduct of this African bishop is calculated to admonish Christian ministers in all ages to enlarge their views so as to comprehend the whole Church of Christ; and

never to feel assured that they grow in true zeal and true charity as long as they do not fear the evils of division, and do not labour to preserve peace and unity.

The progress of Christian grace will always be much seen in the just management of matters of this kind.

There is the greatest reason to believe that the authority of Cyprian had a great effect on the minds of Maximus and the other seduced confessors, whose undoubted piety gave the chief support to Novatian's party. But another circumstance happened about the same time, which contributed to open their eyes effectually. The excessive eagerness of the schismatics at Rome defeated their own end. With the view of increasing the Schism, they were so fraudulent as to send out frequent letters in the names of these confessors, almost throughout all the Churches. Maximus and the rest became acquainted with the fact and were exceedingly surprised: they owned they knew not a syllable of the contents of these letters: and they heartily desired a re-union with the Church. The whole body of the Roman Christians,—and probably, at that time no purer Church existed,—sympathized with these confessors both in their seduction and in their recovery. Tears of joy and thanksgiving to God burst forth in the assembly. "We confess," say Maximus and the rest with ingenuous frankness, "our mistake.—We own Cornelius the bishop of the most holy general[§] Church, chosen by Almighty God and by Christ our Lord; we suffered an imposture: We were circumvented by treachery and a captious plausibility of speech; for though we seem to have had some communication with a schismatic and a heretic,^{||} yet our mind was sincerely with the Church; for we knew that there is one God, one Christ, one Lord, whom we have confessed; one Holy Ghost, and that one bishop ought to be in the general Church." "Should we not," says Cornelius, "be moved with their profession;—and, by restoring them to the Church, give them the opportunity of acting according to that belief which they have dared to profess before all the world? We have restored Maximus the presbyter to his office:—the rest we have also received with the zealous consent of the people."

Cyprian, with his usual animation, congratulated Cornelius on the event; and describes the happy effect which the example of the confessors had on the minds of the people.—And, I cannot but think that, in

^{*} I choose to translate Cornelius's Catholics in *Epi. 46*, which gives an account of this transaction, *unmixed*, rather than *CATHOLIC*, to distinguish the Church of Christ at large from particular separatists.

[†] They confound here two terms that ought to be kept distinct. Novatian was a schismatic but not a heretic.

[‡] *Epi. 47*

^{*} *Epi. 42.*

[†] *Epi. 43, 44.*

[‡] *Epi. 45.*

modern times; much evil might have been prevented in the Church of Christ,—if many excellent men, who have suffered their minds to be harassed by needless and frivolous scruples, had possessed more tenderness of conscience in regard to the question of Schism and separation.—“No one can now be deceived,” says Cyprian, “by the loquacity of a frantic schismatic, since it appears that good and glorious soldiers of Christ could not long be detained out of the Church by perfidy and fallacy.”

The Novatians being baffled at Rome, Novatus and Nicostratus went over to Africa. We have already taken notice of their seditious attempts in those parts. Cornelius, by letter, warned Cyprian of the probable approach of the schismatics; and certainly, there is a disagreeable harshness of language in this account of his enemies as well as in the fragment of his epistle preserved by Eusebius.

Of Novatus himself, the bishop of Carthage, who must have thoroughly known him, asserts expressly and circumstantially that he was guilty of horrible crimes, which, in truth, it is neither pleasant to particularize, nor does the plan of this history call for such a detail.—The honest charity of Cyprian requires that this testimony should be admitted. This bishop was as remarkable for moderation as for zeal. He speaks with much sensibility of persons seduced by the arts of the foul impostor; and observes,—“those only will perish who are wilful in their evils.” The rest, says he, the mercy of God the Father will unite with us, and the grace of our Lord Christ and our patience. I wish this benevolent spirit had had opportunities of knowing Novatian as perfectly as he knew Novatus. But a Roman, who does not appear ever to have come into Africa at all, could only be made known to him by report.—I shall find a convenient place by and by, in which it may be proper to make such further remarks upon him as the scanty and imperfect materials will supply. Let the candid reader, however, always bear in mind, that, though Novatus was, doubtless, a very wicked man, though no ground for the separation appears in history, and though there is not the least reason to believe that the Spirit of God had left the general Church to abide with the dissentients, yet the personal character of several of the supporters of the Schism might still be excellent.

In answer to a friendly letter of the Roman confessors,⁴ Cyprian, after congratulating them on their re-union with the Church, and expressing his sincere sorrow for the former defection, delivers his sentiments on the duty of Christians in this point. The fostering idea, which had seduced these

good men, was a notion of constituting a Church here on earth exactly pure and perfect.—The man, who sustained so much ill-will on account of discipline, may be heard with patience on this subject.—Yet he was far from supposing that fallible mortals should be able, in all cases, to decide positively who were true Christians and who not, and to rectify all abuses, and to cleanse the Church of all its tares. The middle state between impracticable efforts of severity and licentious neglect was Cyprian's judgment: He thought it necessary that the lapsed should shew good marks of penitence; and he held it highly culpable to separate from the visible Church for the want of that exact purity in the members which the present state of things does not admit. But let us hear the bishop himself: The subject is not indeed, of the first importance, but it deserves, on account of its practical influence, to be deeply considered by all friends of vital godliness.

“Though there appear to be tares in the Church, our faith and love ought not to be impeded by seeing them, so that we should desert our post.—Our business is to labour, that we ourselves may stand a scrutiny, that when the corn shall be gathered into the harvest, we may receive reward according to our labour. The Apostle speaks of vessels not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour.

Be it our care that we be found vessels of gold or silver: but we are not to break in pieces the vessels of earth: this belongs to the Lord alone, who has a rod of iron.—The servant cannot be greater than his master: nor must any man claim to himself what the Father attributes to the Son alone.—No man should think himself capable of thoroughly purging the floor, or of separating all the wheat from the tares by human judgment. To think so is proud obstinacy and sacrilegious presumption which a depraved madness assumes to itself; and while some lay claim to a dominion of this kind beyond the limits of justice and equity, they are lost to the Church; and, while they insolently extol themselves, they become blinded by their passions so as to lose the light of truth. With these views, we have aimed at a proper temperature; we have contemplated the balance of the Lord; we have thirsted exceedingly that we might be directed both by the holiness and the mercy of God the Father; and, after a long and careful deliberation, we have settled a just mediocrity.—I refer you to my own books on the subject, which I lately read here; and which, from motives of brotherly love, I have sent over to you to read. In them there is wanting neither a due censure of the lapsed, nor medicine to heal the peni-

³ Epist. 48.⁴ Epist. 49.⁴ Epist. 50, 51.

tent.—I have expressed also my thoughts on the unity of the Church to the best of my poor judgment.*

There was a bishop of some note, named Antoninus, who seemed disposed to embrace the Novatian schism. To him Cyprian in a long letter explains with much force and clearness the whole of his ideas on the subject. A short abridgment of it may merit perusal, because of the charity and good sense which run through it.[†]

He clears himself from the charge of inconsistency, by shewing, in both cases, the views on which he acted under very different circumstances, formerly with strictness, now with lenity;—he informs him what had been determined both at Rome and Carthage concerning the lapsed;—he enlarges on the virtues of Cornelius, who had ventured his life in a time of severe trial under Decius;—he defends him against the unjust aspersions of the Novatians, and demonstrates, that very different rules and methods should be used according to the circumstances of offenders; and that Novatian's stoicism, by which all sins are equal, was absolutely repugnant to the genius of Christianity. He supports his ideas of mercy by striking and apposite passages of Scripture. For instance: "The whole need not a physician, but the sick." What sort of a physician is he, who says, "I cure only the sound?"—"Nor ought we to think all those whom we see wounded by a degree of apostacy during the deadly persecution to be absolutely dead; but rather to lie half dead only, and to be capable of being recovered by sound faith and penitence so as yet to display in future the true characters of confessors and martyrs."

He shews that the censures of the Church ought not to anticipate the judgment of the Lord. His quotations of Scripture, in behalf of receiving penitents again into the Church, may well be spared:—The Novatian uncharitableness will, in our days, scarcely find a defender.

He beautifully insists on the propriety and wholesomeness of mercy, gentleness, and charity, and exposes the unreasonableness of the present dissent from this circumstance,—that formerly, in Africa, some bishops excluded adulterers from a return into the Church,—but they did not form a schism on that account. And yet an adulterer appears to him to deserve a greater degree of severity than a man who lapses through fear of torment.—He exposes the absurdity of the Novatians in exhorting men to repent, while they rob them of all those comforts and hopes which should encourage repentance. It is observable that he alleges nothing par-

ticular against the personal character of Novatian:—but he blames Schism with an excess of severity not to be defended.

Remark, from another circumstance, the strictness of discipline which then prevailed in the purest Churches.—Several persons, who stood firm for a time in persecution and afterwards fell through extremity of torment, were kept three years in a state of exclusion from the Church; and yet they lived all that time with every mark of true repentance.—Cyprian being consulted,[‡] decided that they ought to be re-admitted to communion.

The appearance of a new persecution from Gallus now threatening the Church, Cyprian, with the African synod, wrote to Cornelius on the subject of hastening the reception of penitents, that they might be armed for the approaching storm.[§]

In the mean-time Felicissimus finding, after his condemnation, no security to his reputation in Africa, crossed the sea to Rome, raised a party against Cornelius, and, by menaces, threw him into great fear. Cyprian's spirit seems more disturbed on this occasion than I have seen reason to observe in any of his epistles. He supports the dignity of the episcopal character in a style of great magnificence; but it is evident, that continued ill treatment from seditious characters had led him into some degree of impatience: The language he uses concerning the authority of bishops would sound strange to our ears, though it by no means contains any definite ideas contrary to the Scriptures. The whole epistle is calculated to rouse the dejected spirit of Cornelius; and shews much of the hero,—less of the Christian. He confesses—that he speaks grieved and irritated by a series of unmerited ill usage. He takes notice that, at the very time of writing this, he was again demanded by the people to be exposed to the lions. He speaks of the ordination of Fortunatus and also of Maximus, by the schismatics, in a contemptuous manner.—It is very evident, that, on the whole, he triumphed in Carthage among his own people. His great virtues and unquestionable sincerity secured him their affections; but they seem not to have been sufficiently patient and discreet in the re-admission of offenders. He complains that, in some cases, they were violent and resentful;—and in others, precipitately easy and favourable. The eloquence, and even the genuine charity of this great man, appears throughout this fifty-fifth epistle;—but it is deficient in the meekness and the moderation, which shine in his other performances.

* He means his treatise on the lapsed and on the unity of the Church.

† Epist. 53.

‡ Epist. 55.

§ Epist. 54.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EFFECTS OF THE PERSECUTION OF DECIUS
IN THE EASTERN CHURCH.

THE eastern and western Churches were, in those times, divided from each other by the Greek and Roman language, though cemented by the common bond—of the Roman government, and much more—of the common Salvation. It will often be found convenient to consider their history distinctly. The gentile Church of Jerusalem still maintained its respectability under Alexander its bishop, who has been mentioned above. He was again called on to confess Christ before the tribunal of the president at Cæsarea; and, in this second trial of his faith, having acquitted himself with his usual fidelity, he was cast into prison: His venerable locks procured him neither pity nor respect; and he finally breathed out his soul under confinement.¹

At Antioch, Babylas after his confession dying in bonds, Fabius was chosen his successor. In this persecution the renowned Origen was called to suffer extremely. Beasts, torments, a dungeon, the pressure of an iron chair, the distension of his feet for many days, the threats of burning, and other evils were inflicted by his enemies,—all which he manfully endured: and his life was still preserved; for the judge was solicitously careful that his tortures should not kill him. "What words he uttered on these occasions, and how useful to those who need consolation, many of his epistles," says Eusebius, "declare with no less truth than accuracy!"—If the words here alluded to were now extant, more light, I apprehend, might be thrown on the internal character of Origen, in respect to experimental godliness, than by all his works which remain. These show the scholar, the philosopher, and the critic:—Those would have displayed the Christian. This great man died in his seventieth year, about the same time as the emperor Decius.

By and by I shall find occasion to insert an estimate of his character.

Diocletian was at this time bishop of Alexandria,—a person of great and deserved renown in the Church. We are obliged to Eusebius for a few fragments of his writings, some of which being historical, must be here inserted. In an epistle to Germanus he writes thus: "Sabinius, the Roman governor, sent an officer to seek me, during the persecution of Decius, and I remained four days at home, expecting his coming: he made the most accurate search in the

roads, the rivers, and the fields, where he suspected I might be hid. A confusion seems to have seized him, that he could not find my house; for he had no idea that a man, in my circumstances, should stay at home. At length, after four days, God ordered me to remove;¹ and, having opened me a way contrary to all expectation, I and my servants and many of the brethren went together. The event shewed that the whole was the work of Divine Providence.—About sun-set, I was seized, together with my whole company, by the soldiers, and was led to Taposiria. But my friend Timotheus, by the providence of God, was not present, nor was he seized. He came afterwards to my house, and found it forsaken and guarded; and he then learned that we were taken captive.—How wonderful was the dispensation! but it shall be related precisely as it happened.—A countryman met Timotheus as he was flying in confusion, and asked the cause of his hurry: he told him the truth: the peasant heard the story and went away to a nuptial feast, at which it was the custom to watch all night. He informed the guests of what he had heard. At once, they all rose up, as by a signal, and ran quickly to us, and shouted: our soldiers, struck with a panic, fled; and the invaders found us laid down on unfurnished beds. I first thought they must have been a company of robbers. They ordered me to rise and go out quickly: at length, I understood their real designs; and I cried out, and intreated them earnestly to depart, and to let us alone. But, if they really meant any kindness to us, I requested them to strike off my head, and so to deliver me from my persecutors. They compelled me to rise by downright violence: and I then threw myself on the ground. They seized my hands and feet, pulled me out by force; and placed me on an ass, and conducted me from the place."

In so remarkable a manner was this useful life preserved to the Church. We shall see it was not in vain.

In an epistle to Fabius bishop of Antioch, he gives the following account of the persecution at Alexandria, which had preceded the Decian persecution by a whole year, and which must have happened therefore under Philip, the most open friend of Christians. "A certain augur and poet took pains to stir up the malice of the gentiles against us, and to inflame them with zeal for the support of their own superstitions. Stimulated by him, they gave free course to their licentiousness, and deemed the murder of Christians to be the most perfect piety and the purest worship of demons. They first seized an old man, named Metras, and ordered him to blaspheme: he re-

¹ By a vision or some other Divine manifestation, I suppose.

fused; and they beat him with clubs, and pricked his face and eyes with sharp reeds: they dragged him to the suburbs, and they there stoned him. Then they hurried one Quinta, a faithful woman, to the idol-temple, and insisted on her worshipping of the gods.—To this she shewed the strongest marks of abomination: They then tied her by the feet; dragged her over the rough pavement through all the city; dashed her against mill-stones, and whipped her; and, lastly, they led her back to the place where they had first seized her; and there they dispatched her.—After this, with one accord, they all rushed on the houses of the godly: every one ran to the house of his neighbour, spoiled, and plundered it; and purloined the most valuable goods, and threw away those things which were vile and refuse, and burnt them in the roads; and thus was exhibited the appearance of a captive and spoiled city. The brethren fled and withdrew themselves, and received with joy the spoiling of their goods, as those did to whom Paul beareth witness; and I do not know, that any person, who fell into their hands,—except one,—denied the Lord. Among others, they seized an aged virgin, called Apollonia, and dashed out all her teeth; and having kindled a fire before the city, they threatened to burn her alive, unless she would consent to blaspheme. This admirable woman begged for a little intermission; and she then quickly leaped into the fire, and was consumed. They laid violent hands on Serapion in his own house: they tortured him and broke all his limbs; and, lastly, they threw him head-long from an upper room. No road, public or private, was passable to us, by night or by day: the people crying out always and every where, that unless we would speak blasphemy, we should be thrown into the flames;—and these evils continued a long time. A sedition then succeeded, and a civil war, which averted their fury from us, and turned it against one another; and, again, we breathed a little during the mitigation of their rage. Immediately the change of government was announced: The persecuting Decius succeeded Philip our protector, and we were threatened with destruction: The edict, which our Lord foretold would be so dreadful as to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect,¹ appeared against us.—All were astonished; many Christians of quality discovered themselves immediately through fear; others, who held public offices, were constrained by their office to appear; and others were brought forward and produced by their gentile relations. Each person was cited by name. They then approached the unholy altars; some pale and trembling,

not as if they were going to sacrifice, but to be themselves the victims; so that they were derided by the multitude who stood around; and it was visible to all that they were very much frightened both at the prospect of death and at the crime of sacrificing: but some ran more readily to the altar, and affirmed boldly, that they never had been Christians. Of such our Lord affirmed most truly, that they should be saved with great difficulty.² Of the rest some followed the various examples above-mentioned; and others fled:—Some persisted in the faith; and suffered bonds and imprisonment for many days; but, at last, before they were led to the tribunal, they abjured their religion;—others held out longer, and endured torments.—But the firm and stable pillars of the Lord, being strengthened by him, and having received vigour and courage proportionate and correspondent to the lively faith which was in them, became admirable martyrs of his kingdom.—The first of these was Julian, a gouty person who could neither stand nor walk; he was brought forth with two others who carried him; one of whom immediately denied Christ. The other, called Cronion the Benevolent, and old Julian himself, having confessed the Lord, were led through the whole city,—very large as ye know it is,—sitting on camels: they were then scourged, and were at last burnt in a very hot fire in the view of surrounding multitudes. A soldier, named Beas, stood by them and defended them from insults; which so incensed the mob; that the man lost his head for having thus behaved boldly in the service of his God.—An African by birth, called Macar,³ and truly meriting the appellation, having resisted much importunity, was burnt alive. After these Epimachus and Alexander, who had long sustained imprisonment and undergone a thousand tortures, were burnt to death; and along with these four women. Ammonarion, a holy virgin, was grievously tormented by the judge for having declared beforehand that she would not repeat the blasphemy which he ordered: she continued faithful, and was led away to execution. The venerable ancient Mercuria, and Dionysia, a mother, indeed, of many children, but a mother who did not love her children more than her Lord; and another Ammonarion,—these, together with many others, were slain by the sword without being first exposed to torments;—for the president was ashamed of torturing them to no purpose, and of being baffled by women;—which had been remarkably the case in his attempt to overcome the former Ammonarion, who had undergone what might have been esteemed sufficient torture for them all.—

¹ It is evident that this application of our Lord's words is a mistake.

² I suppose he means because they were rich.
³ Happy or blessed.

Heron, Ater, and Isidore, Egyptians, and with them a boy of fifteen, called Dioscorus, were brought before the tribunal: the boy resisted both the blandishments and the tortures which were applied to him: the rest, after cruel torments, were burnt. The boy having answered in the wisest manner to all questions, and excited the admiration of the judge, was dismissed by him from motives of compassion, with an intimation of hope that he might afterwards repent.—And now the excellent Dioscorus is with us, reserved to a greater and longer conflict. Nemesian was first accused as a partner of robbers; but he cleared himself before the Centurion of this charge:—An information—that he was a Christian, was then brought against him, and he came bound before the president, who most unjustly scourged him with twice the severity used in the case of malefactors, and then burnt him among robbers.—Thus was he honoured by resembling Christ in suffering.

And now some of the military guard, Ammon, Zeno, Ptolemy, and Ingenius, and with them old Theophilus, stood before the tribunal; when a certain person being interrogated whether he was a Christian, and appearing disposed to deny the imputation, they made such lively signs of aversion as to smite the beholders; but before they could be seized, they ran voluntarily to the tribunal and owned themselves Christians,—so that the governor and his assessors were astonished.—God triumphed gloriously in these; and gave them evidently the ascendancy over the judges; and they went to execution with all the marks of exultation.

Many others through the towns and villages were torn to pieces by the gentiles. Heron was an agent to a certain magistrate; yet he refused to sacrifice: This man, after repeated indignities, was killed by a large stake driven through his intestines.—But why need I mention the multitude of those who wandered in deserts and mountains, and were at last destroyed by famine, and thirst, and cold, and diseases, and robbers, and wild beasts? Those, who survived, are witnesses of their faithfulness and victory. Suffice it to relate one fact: There was a very aged person, named Chæremon, bishop of the city Nilus. He, together with his wife, fled into an Arabian mountain; and they did not return; nor could the brethren, after much searching, discover them alive or dead; and many persons about the same Arabian mountain were led captive by the Barbarian Saracens, some of whom were afterwards redeemed for money with difficulty;—others could never regain their liberty." Dionysius adds something concerning the benevolence of the martyrs towards the lapses, and contrasts it with the inexorable severity of Novatian.

Two things are evident from this narrative, 1st, that the persecution found the eastern Christians as poorly provided against the storm as the western. Long peace and prosperity had corrupted both; and men, in the former part of this century, had forgotten that a Christian life was that of a stranger. The Decian persecution, under God, was at once a scourge and an antidote. 2d, Yet there still existed a competent number of those who should prove the truth of Christianity, and the power of divine grace accompanying it.—The true Church is not destroyed, but flourishes and triumphs amidst inward and outward evils.

Eusebius relates a story, from Dionysius's letters to Fabius, which he says was full of wonder: "There was a faithful aged person, named Serapion, who had lived blameless a long time, but fell, in the time of trial, through fear of death or of bodily pain. He had frequently solicited to be restored to the Church, but in vain,—because he had sacrificed. He was seized with a distemper and continued speechless and senseless for three days successively; but recovering a little on the fourth, he called to his grandson, "And how long," says he, "do you detain me? I beseech you hasten and quickly dismiss me. Desire one of the presbyters to visit me;" and after this he was again speechless. The boy ran for the presbyter; it was night; the presbyter was sick and could not come. But he had given directions to receive dying penitents,—particularly if they should have supplicated for it,—that they might leave the world in good hope. He gave a little of the Eucharist to the boy; and bid him to dip it in water, and put it into the old man's mouth: The child hastened to follow the directions; and found Serapion a little recruited,—who said, "You are come, son;—do quickly what you are ordered, and dismiss me." The old man had no sooner received the morsel, than he gave up the ghost.—Was he not evidently reserved, until he was absolved; and was not his sin remitted, and the man acknowledged by Christ as a faithful servant on account of many good works." Thus far Dionysius.

I remark here, 1st, That the connexion between the sacrament and the grace conveyed by it, being usually thus expressed as if it were necessary and indissoluble, both in baptism and the Lord's Supper, gave occasion to the increase of much superstition in the Church. I am disposed to believe, that both Dionysius and Serapion knew that the sign was nothing without the inward grace. Yet perhaps they are not to be acquitted of superstition on account of the inordinate stress which they laid on external things.—The reader must observe that this evil continues to grow during the third century.

2d,—That, along with this superstition, the

power of the leaders of the Church would naturally increase beyond the due bounds. That it did so afterwards surprisingly is well known;—but I judge the evil to have begun already both in the east and in the west.

3d,—That there was at that time, among persons of real piety, a general propensity to extend discipline too far. Serapion ought, doubtless, to have been sooner received into the Church. The Lord seems to have favoured him with a token of his loving kindness, by fulfilling his desires of being re-admitted into the Church before he left the world.—But how much more decent and proper would it have been for him to have been received while in health? Satan always pushes men to extremes. Church-discipline was held then too high; with us it is reduced to the lowest state. Without communion with a visible Church establishment in form, however impracticable it might be, it was scarce thought possible for a man to be saved: Many persons, at that time, would have had no hope of Serapion's salvation, if the power of his disease had prevented the reception of the Eucharist. This miserable superstition increased, till by the light of the reformation it was destroyed. On the contrary, in our age, the Lord's Supper itself is treated with levity by thousands who call themselves Christians; and communion with a settled ministry and Church is esteemed as a thing of trifling consequence by numbers who profess the doctrines of vital godliness.

Dionysius wrote several other tracts which are mentioned by Eusebius:—Among the rest, he wrote to Cornelius, bishop of Rome, in answer to his letter against Novatian;^o and informed him—that he had been invited by Helenus of Tarsus in Cilicia, and by the rest of the bishops of his neighbourhood, by Firmilian of Cappadocia and Theoctistes of Palestine, to meet them in a synod at Antioch, where some attempts were made to strengthen the Novatian party.—But all these Churches united to condemn the schism: and, with this view, Dionysius wrote to the Roman confessors both before and after they had returned to the Church. On the whole, the East and West united in condemning the new dissenters; whose HEAD having professed that some brethren had compelled him to the separation, Dionysius wrote to Novatian himself to this effect: “If you were led unwillingly, as you say, you will prove it by returning willingly; for a man ought to suffer any thing rather than to rend the Church of God. Even martyrdom on this account would be no less glorious than on any other; even more so.—For in common martyrdom a man is a witness for one soul;—here for the whole Church. And now, if you would compel or persuade the brethren

to unanimity, your good conduct would be more laudable than your defection was culpable. The latter will be forgotten, the former will be celebrated through the Christian world. But if you find it impracticable to draw over others, save your own soul at least; I wish you to be strong in the Lord, and studious of peace.”—Such was the seal of the Christian leaders at that time for the preservation of UNITY. If there had been a defection from Christian purity of doctrine in the general Church, or if the Heads of it, for the most part, had been vicious men in principle or practice, one might have suspected that the Lord had forsaken these, and that his spirit had rested chiefly with the new separatists. But that godliness in a considerable degree prevailed still in the Church at large is very evident. Cyprian, Dionysius, Cornelius, Firmilian, were holy men: Martyrs, in abundance from their flocks, suffered for Christ's sake: A number of Church-officers suffered in a very edifying manner.—The lapsed were restored among them by the most Christian methods of mildness and just discipline;—and this with success in a variety of cases.—Dionysius concurred with Cyprian in his views on the subject; and, though the flame of Christian piety was considerably lowered since the days of Ignatius, I see not a shadow of proof that there was any just reason for dissent or any superior degree of spirituality with the Novatians.—If, for example, there had been many persons among them of half the piety of Cyprian, I think it probable, that history would not have been silent respecting them.

It is my duty to trace the work of the Divine Spirit wherever I can find it. Traces of this Spirit, with the Novatians in general, in these times, I cannot discern: and yet, it is improbable, that they should have been a people altogether forsaken of God. Whatever the real truth, as it is in Jesus, is professed, there some measure of his Spirit must probably exist. Novatian himself is constantly reprehended both by Cyprian and by Dionysius: Yet, I observe, they cast no imputations on his moral character: His schism alone is the object of their reprehension: Cornelius, indeed, carries the matter still farther, as we have seen; but I am not disposed to credit all he says: His temper was heated by personal competition.

Before we proceed to other instances of the Decian persecution, it may be proper to conclude the affair of Novatian: Let us collect what evidence we can; and endeavour to form a just estimate of his character:—If our observations appear unsatisfactory;—let it be imputed to the scantiness of the materials.

Novatian was originally a stoic; and seems to have contracted all the severity, which marked that sect of philosophers. He was

* Eusebius certainly calls him Novatus by mistake.

born a Phrygian, and came to Rome, where he embraced Christianity. He applied for the office of presbyter; but, as he had neglected certain ecclesiastical forms after recovery from a sickness, he was objected to by the clergy and the people. The bishop, —probably, Fabian the predecessor of Cornelius,—desired that the rules might be dispensed with in his case. This was granted; and it is a testimony, surely, rather in favour of his abilities and conduct than otherwise, particularly, as the circumstance stands recorded by the pen of his rival Cornelius.* That he excelled in genius, learning, and eloquence, is certain; and hence, it is not probable, that he was a man of debauched or of loose morals. The evils of his schism were unquestionably great; but no vice seems ascribed to his character; nor does any just suspicion lie against the purity of his intentions. One of the letters of the Roman clergy to Cyprian, written by Novatian himself, is still extant: It is worthy of a Roman presbyter and of a zealous Christian;—and, at that time, the writer coincided in opinion with the African prelate. Eusebius, in his *Chronicon*, ranks him among the confessors; and it is certain, that while he continued presbyter his fame was not only without a blot, but very fair in the Church.

Perhaps it had been happy for him if he had never consented to become a bishop. The preference given to Cornelius in the election of a bishop, was, probably enough, the grand cause of the schism: From being actuated by a temperate degree of severity, he became intolerably inexorable in his ideas of discipline: It is not for man to say how far temper, stoicism, prejudice, and principle might all unite in this business:—We must now behold him bishop of the Novatians, and industriously spreading the schism through the Christian world. The repeated condemnation of it in synods hindered not its growth; and as purity of principle and inflexible severity of discipline, were their favourite objects, it is not to be apprehended that Novatian could have supported himself in the opinion of his followers without some degree of exemplary conduct. He is allowed to have preserved in soundness the Christian FAITH: There is actually extant a treatise by him on the Trinity;—and that, one of the most regular and most accurate which is to be found among the ancients. It is astonishing that any man should ascribe the ideas of the trinitarians mainly to the Nicene Fathers. We have repeatedly seen proofs of the doctrine being held distinctly in all its parts from the Apostles' days. This treatise by Novatian may be added to the list.—I know not how to abridge it better than by referring the reader to the Athanasian creed.

The Trinity in Unity, and the Godhead and Manhood of Christ in one person, are not more plainly to be found in that creed, than in the composition of this contemporary of Cyprian.

I wish that a more experimental view,—a more practical use—of Christian doctrines, were to be seen in it. But all professors of Christianity,—Churchmen or dissenters—seem, at that time, to have much relaxed in this respect. The favour and simplicity of the life of faith in Jesus was not so well known: yet,—particularly under the article of the Holy Ghost,—he speaks very distinctly of “HIM as the author of regeneration, the pledge of the promised inheritance, and, as it were, the hand-writing of eternal salvation,—who makes us the temple of God and his house,—who intercedes for us with “groanings which cannot be uttered,”—who acts as our advocate and defender,—who dwells in our bodies, and sanctifies them for immortality. He it is, who fights against the flesh:—hence the flesh fights against the spirit:—and he proceeds to speak in the best manner of his holy and blessed operations in the minds of the faithful.”

He wrote also a sensible little tract against the bondage of Jewish meats; in which he explains the nature of Christian liberty, according the views of St. Paul, with just directions for the maintenance of temperance and decorum.

The letter to Cyprian before mentioned closes his works. He lived to the time of Valerian, under whom Cyprian suffered. In that persecution also fell Novatian by martyrdom, as appears from the authentic testimony of Socrates.† His rival Cornelius died a little time before them, in exile for the faith.—It will be a grateful refreshment to the reader to pause for a moment; and to contemplate these three men meeting in a better world, clothed with the garments of Jesus, and in him knowing their mutual relation, which prejudice hindered in this mortal scene of strife, infirmity and imperfection. Neither the separation of Novatian, nor the severity with which the two regular bishops condemned him, can be justified.—There seems, however, sufficient evidence of the Christian character of the separatist:—The general tenor of his life;—and above all, his death, shew to whom he belonged.‡

The reader will pardon this digression;—if that be indeed a digression,—which shews that the Spirit of God was not limited to one denomination of Christians; and which paves the way for a liberal and candid construction of characters. In the future scenes of this history, while we trace the kingdom of God through a multiplicity of names and divisions

* Nov. Trin. p. 114.

† L. IV. C. 28.

‡ Greg. Nys. vita Thaum. p. 1000.—See Fleury, B. 6—25.

• See his letter in Eusebius.

• Pam. 51.

of men, it will highly behove us to cultivate an unprejudiced temper.

To proceed with the Decian persecution.—The management of this seems to have been the whole employment of the magistrates. Swords, wild beasts, pits, red-hot chairs, wheels for stretching human bodies, and talons of iron to tear them;—these were, at this time, the instruments of pagan vengeance. Malice and covetousness in informing against Christians were eagerly and powerfully set on work during this whole short, but horrible reign: And the genius of men was never known to have had more of employment in aiding the savageness of the heart. Life was prolonged in torture, in order that impatience in suffering might effect at length, what surprise and terror could not.

Mark two examples of Satanic artifice. A martyr having endured the rack and burning plates, the judge ordered him to be rubbed all over with honey, and then to be exposed in the sun, which was very hot, lying on his back with his hands tied behind him, that he might be stung by the flies.—Another person, young and in the flower of his age, was, by the order of the same judge, carried into a pleasant garden among flowers, near a pleasing rivulet surrounded with trees: here they laid him on a feather bed, bound him with silken cords, and left him alone. Afterward, a very handsome lewd woman was introduced to him; who began to embrace him and to court him with all imaginable impudence. The martyr spit in her face; and at length bit off his own tongue; as the most effectual method in his power of resisting the assaults of sensuality. In the most shocking and disgusting trials, Christianity, however, appeared what it is,—true holiness; while its persecutors shewed that they were at enmity with every virtuous principle of internal benevolence, and of external decorum.*

Alexander, bishop of Comana, suffered martyrdom by fire. At Smyrna Eudemon the bishop apostatized, and several unhappily followed his example. But the glory of this Church, once so celebrated by the voice of infallibility, was not totally lost. The example of Pionius, one of the presbyters, was salutary to all the Churches.—The account of his martyrdom is, in substance, confirmed by Eusebius:—Nor, in general, is there any thing in it improbable, or unworthy of the Christian spirit.—In expectation of being seized, he put a chain about his own neck, and caused Sabina and Asclepiades to do the same,—to shew their readiness to suffer. Polemon, keeper of the idol-temple, came to them with magistrates: “Don’t you know,” says he, “that the emperor has ordered you

to sacrifice?” “We are not ignorant of the commandments,” says Pionius, “but they are those commandments which direct us to worship God.” “Come to the marketplace,” says Polemon, “and see the truth of what I have said.” “We obey the true God,” said Sabina and Asclepiades.

When the martyrs were in the midst of the multitude in the market-place, “It would be wiser in you,” says Polemon, “to submit and avoid the torture.” Pionius began to speak: “Citizens of Smyrna, who please yourselves with the beauty of your walls and city, and value yourselves on account of your Poet Homer; and ye Jews, if there be any among you, hear me speak a few words: We find that Smyrna has been esteemed the finest city in the world, and was reckoned the chief of those who have contended for the honour of Homer’s birth. I am informed that you deride those who come of their own accord to sacrifice, or who do not refuse when urged to it. But surely your admitted Homer should teach you never to rejoice at the death of any man.” “And ye Jews ought to obey Moses, who tells you, ‘Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from him: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.’” And Solomon says, ‘Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth.’—For my part I would rather die, or undergo any sufferings than contradict my conscience in religious concerns.” Whence then proceed those bursts of laughter and cruel scoffs of the Jews, pointed not only against those who have sacrificed, but against us? They insult us with a malicious pleasure to see our long peace interrupted.—Though we were their enemies, still we are men.—But what harm have we done them? What have we made them to suffer? Whom have we spoken against? Whom have we persecuted with unjust and unrelenting hatred? Whom have we compelled to worship idols? Have they no compassion for the unfortunate? Are they themselves less culpable than the poor wretches, who, through the fear of men or of tortures, have been induced to renounce their religion? He then addressed the Jews on the grounds of their own Scriptures, and solemnly placed before the Pagans the day of judgment.

The sermon bore some resemblance to Stephen’s^a in like circumstances: It tended to beget conviction of sin, and to lead men to feel their need of the Divine Saviour, according to the justest views and in the soundest taste of the Gospel. He spoke

* Odyss. xxi. v. 412.

† Deut. xxii. 4.

^a Pionius adapts himself to his audience, and convicts them of guilt even by their own principles, a thing not hard to be done in all cases,—except in those of true Christians, who never fail to shew their faith by their works.

^b Acts of the Apostles, Chap. vii.

¹ Jerom vita Paul.

² Rev. ii. 8, 9, &c.

³ Euseb. B. 4. C. 15.—Fleury, B. 6.—30.

long, and was very attentively heard; and there is reason to hope that his exertions were not in vain. The people who surrounded him said with Polemon, "Believe us, Pionius, your probity and wisdom make us deem you worthy to live;—and life is pleasant."—Thus powerfully did conscience and humanity operate in their hearts. "I own," says the martyr, "life is pleasant, but I mean that eternal life which I aspire after: I do not with a contemptuous spirit reject the good things of this life; but I prefer something which is infinitely better:—I thank you for your expressions of kindness: I cannot, however, but suspect some stratagem in it."

The people continued intreating him: and he still discoursed to them of a future state.—The well-known sincerity and unquestionable virtues of the man seem to have filled the Smyrneans with veneration, and his enemies began to fear an uproar in his favour. "It is impossible to persuade you then," said Polemon. "I would to God I could," says Pionius, "persuade you to be a Christian!"

Sabina, by the advice of Pionius, who was her brother, had changed her name, for fear of falling into the hands of her pagan mistress, who, in order to compel her to renounce Christianity, had formerly put her in bonds, and banished her to the mountains, where the brethren secretly supported her with nourishment. She now called herself Theodota. "What God dost thou adore?" says Polemon. "God Almighty," she answered, "who made all things;—of which we are assured by his Word Jesus Christ." "And what dost thou adore?" speaking to Aclepiades. "Jesus Christ," says he. "What, is there another God?" says Polemon. "No," says he, "this is the same whom we come here to confess."—He, who worships the Trinity in Unity, will find no difficulty in reconciling these two confessions. Let him, who does not so worship, attempt it. One person pitying Pionius, said, "Why do you that are so learned seek death in this resolute manner?"

When carried to prison, they found there a presbyter named Lemnus,—a woman named Macedonia,—and another called Eutychiana, a Montanist.

These all employed themselves in praising God, and shewed every mark of patience and cheerfulness. Many pagans visited Pionius, and attempted to persuade him to renounce his religion:—His answers struck them with admiration. Some persons, who, by compulsion, had sacrificed, visited them and shed many tears. "I now suffer afresh," says Pionius; "and methinks I am torn in pieces when I see the pearls of the Church trod under-foot by swine, and the stars of heaven cast to the earth by the tail of the

dragon.^b—But our sins have been the cause."

The Jews, whose character of bigotry had not been lessened by all their miseries, and whose hatred to Christ continued from age to age with astonishing uniformity, invited some of the lapsed Christians to their synagogue. The generous spirit of Pionius was moved to express itself vehemently against the Jews. Among other things he said, "They pretend that Jesus Christ died like other men by constraint. Was that Man a common felon, whose disciples have cast out devils for so many years? Could that man be forced to die, for whose sake his disciples, and so many others, have voluntarily suffered the severest punishment?"—Having spoken a long time to them, he requested them to depart out of the prison.

Though the miraculous dispensations attendant on Christianity form no part of the plan of this history, I cannot but observe on this occasion, how strongly their continuance in the third century is here attested. Pionius affirms, that devils were ejected by Christians in the name of Christ; and he does this in the face of enemies, who would have been glad of the shadow of an argument to justify their bitterness, resentment and perfidy.

The captain of the horse came to the prison, and ordered Pionius to go to the idol-temple. "Your bishop Eudemon hath already sacrificed," said he. The martyr, knowing that nothing of this sort could be done legally till the arrival of the proconsul, refused. The captain put a cord about his neck, and dragged him along with Sabina and others. They cried, "We are Christians," and fell to the ground, that they might not enter the idol-temple. Pionius, after much resistance, was forced into it and placed on the ground before the altar: and there stood the unhappy Eudemon, after having sacrificed.

Lepidus, a judge, asked; "What God do you adore?" "Him," says Pionius, "that made heaven and earth." "You mean him that was crucified?" "I mean him whom God the Father sent for the salvation of men." The judges then whispered to one another, and said,— "We must compel them to say what we wish."—Pionius heard them, and cried, "Blush, ye adorers of false gods: have some respect to justice, and obey your own laws: they enjoin you not to do violence to us; but merely to put us to death."

Then Rufinus said, "Forbear, Pionius, this thirst after vain-glory." Is this your eloquence?" answered the martyr: "Is this what you have read in your books? Was not Socrates thus treated by the Athenians? According to your judgment and advice HE sought after vain-glory, because

he applied himself to wisdom and virtue."—Ruffinus was struck dumb.—The case was apposite in a degree: Socrates, undoubtedly, suffered persecution on account of his zeal for moral virtue.

A certain person placed a crown on Pionius's head, which he tore in pieces before the altar: The pagans, finding their persuasions ineffectual remanded them to prison.

A few days after this, the proconsul Quintilian returned to Smyrna, and examined Pionius. He, then, tried both tortures and persuasions in vain; and, at length, enraged at his obstinacy, he sentenced him to be burnt alive. The martyr went cheerfully to the place of execution, and thanked God, who had preserved his body pure from idolatry. After he was stretched and nailed to the wood, the executioner said to him, "Change your mind, and the nails shall be taken out." "I have felt them," answered Pionius: He then remained thoughtful for a time; afterward he said, "I hasten, O Lord, that I may the sooner be a partaker of the resurrection." Metrodorus, a Marcionite, was nailed to a plank of wood in a similar manner: They were then both placed upright; and a great quantity of fuel was heaped around them.—Pionius, with his eyes shut, remained motionless, absorbed in prayer while the fire was consuming him. At length he opened his eyes, and looking cheerfully on the fire, said, "Amen;"—his last words were, "Lord, receive my soul."—Of the particular manner in which his companions suffered death we have no account.

In this narrative we see the spirit of heavenly love triumphing over all worldly and selfish considerations. Does not the zeal of Pionius deserve to be commemorated as long as the world endures? The man appears to have forgotten his sufferings: He is wholly taken up in vindicating the divine truth to the last.—Who can doubt of his having been a faithful preacher of the gospel? He is intent on the blessed work amidst his bitterest pains.—Glorious exemplification of true religion in its simplicity!

If there be any thing particular in the treatment he underwent, it consists in the repeated endeavours which were made to preserve his life.—The man was much respected, though the Christian was abhorred. Integrity and uprightness, when eminent and supported by wisdom and learning, fail not to overawe, to captivate, and to soften mankind. The voice of natural conscience pleads; but cannot overcome the enmity of the human heart against God.

There are many good reasons which may be assigned why sound learning ought to be cultivated by Christians, and especially by all who mean to be pastors of Christ's flock. The case of Pionius clearly intimates this. Knowledge never fails to ensure respect.

It does this a thousand times more effectually with mankind than birth or wealth, or rank, or power.—It is evident that Pionius was a man of learning, and that his persecutors esteemed him on that account, and took pains to detach him from Christianity.—We may conceive how useful this accomplishment had been in the course of his ministry.

Further.—A Montanist and a Marcionite are his fellow-sufferers. The latter is consumed with him in the flames. Doubtless, from all the information of antiquity, both these heresies appear in an odious light. But there might be exceptions, and who so likely to be among those exceptions, as those who suffered? We must not confine the truth of godliness to any particular denomination. Providence, by mixing persons of very opposite parties in the same scene of persecution, demonstrates that the pure faith and love of Jesus may operate in those who cannot own each other as brethren: I know not whether Pionius and Metrodorus did so on earth: I trust they do so in heaven.

In Asia a merchant, named Maximus, was brought before Optimus the proconsul, who inquired after his condition? "I was born free," said he, "but I am the servant of Jesus Christ." "Of what profession are you?" "I live by commerce." "Are you a Christian?" "Though a sinner, yet I am a Christian." While the usual process of persuasions and of tortures was going forward;—he exclaimed,—“These are not torments which we suffer for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: They are wholesome UNCTIONS.”—Such was the effect of the Holy Ghost shedding the love of God in Christ abroad in the human heart!—He was ordered to be stoned to death.

All this time the persecution raged in Egypt with unremitting fury. In the lower Thebais there was a young man named Paul, to whom, at fifteen years of age, his parents left a great estate. He was a person of much learning, of a mild temper, and full of the love of God. He had a married sister, with whom he lived. Her husband was base enough to design an information against him, in order to obtain his estate. Paul, having notice of this, retired to the desert mountains, where he waited till the persecution ceased. Habit, at length, made solitude agreeable to him. He found a pleasant retreat, and lived there to the age of fourscore and ten years. At the time of his retirement he was twenty-three, and he lived to be a hundred and thirteen years old.⁴ This is the first distinct account of an hermit in the Christian Church.—No doubt ought to be made of the genuine piety of Paul.—Those, who, in our days, condemn ALL Monks with indiscriminating contempt,

seem to make no allowance for the prodigious change of times and circumstances. Reflect seriously on the sort of society to which Christians were exposed in the reign of Decius: Was there a day,—an hour, in which they could enjoy its comforts, or secure its benefits? Where could Christian eyes or ears direct their attention,—and not meet with objects exceedingly disgusting? If Paul preferred solitude in such a season, we need not be more surprised than we are at the conduct of Elijah the prophet.—But, why did he not, with the return of peace, return also to the discharge of social duties?—The habit was contracted; and the love of extremes is the infirmity of human nature.—Besides a heart, breathing the purest love to God, might naturally enough be led to think the perfection of godliness best attainable in solitude.—The increasing spirit of superstition soon produced a number of imitations of Paul: and the most lamentable effect was, that those, who possessed only external religion, placed their righteousness and their confidence in monastic austerities;—and thus, from the depraved imitations of well-meant beginnings, one of the strongest supports of false religion gradually strengthened itself in the Christian world.

Here we close the account of the Decian persecution. Its author is admired by Pagan writers. What has been said of Trajan and Antoninus is applicable to him: He was a moralist; and he was a cruel persecutor.—It cannot be denied, that for thirty months the Prince of Darkness had full opportunity to gratify his malice and his fury. But the Lord meant to chasten and to purify his Church,—not to destroy it. The whole scene is memorable on several accounts.—It was not a local or intermitting, but an universal and constant persecution: and, therefore, it must have transmitted great numbers to the regions where sin and pain shall be no more.—The peace of thirty years had corrupted the whole Christian atmosphere: The lightning of the Decian rage rekindled and cleared it. No doubt, the effects were salutary to the Church. External Christianity might indeed have still spread, if no such courage had been used; but the internal spirit of the gospel would, probably, have been extinguished. The survivors had an opportunity of learning, in the faithfulness of the martyrs, what that spirit is; and men were again taught, that he alone, who strengthens Christians in their sufferings, can effectually convert the heart to true Christianity.—The storm, however, proved fatal to many individuals who apostatized; and Christianity was, in that way, cleared of many false friends. We have also noticed two collateral evils.—Both the formation of schisms and of superstitious solitudes had their date from the Decian persecution.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH DURING THE REIGN OF GALLUS.

THE successor of Decius allowed the Church of Christ a little tranquillity. During that space the two small treatises of Cyprian concerning the lapsed and concerning unity, were, doubtless, of some service in recovering the lapsed to a state of penitence, and in disposing the minds of men to preserve the unity of the Church. In the former of these treatises, indeed, it must be confessed, he carries his censure of the Novatians too far. The sin and the danger of rending the body of Christ might have been stated in the strongest terms, without pronouncing the evil to be absolutely damnable: This was carrying the matter beyond all bounds of moderation. But the same candour which should incline one to apprehend that Novatian was influenced by good intentions, in his too rigid scheme, pleads also for the motives of Cyprian's zeal in the maintenance of unity.—He seems to have considered the mischief as most exceedingly destructive; and he can find no terms sufficiently strong to express his detestation of it.

But Gallus soon began to disturb the peace of the Christians, though not with the incessant fury of his predecessor.—A Roman presbyter, named Hyppolitus, had been seduced into Novatianism; but his mind had not been perverted from the faith and love of Jesus. He was now called on to suffer martyrdom, which he did with courage and fidelity. Either curiosity or a desire of instructive information induced some persons to ask him in the last scene of his sufferings, whether he still persisted in the communion of Novatian? He declared in the most explicit terms, that he now saw the affair in a new light,—that he repented of having encouraged the schism,—and that he died in the communion of the general Church.—Such a testimony must have weakened the influence of the schism.

In this persecution of Gallus it was that Cornelius confessed the faith of Christ, and was banished, by the emperor, to Civita Vecchia; which gave occasion to a congratulatory letter from Cyprian. In one part of it he reflects on the Novatians with his usual vehemence:—The rest breathes a fervent spirit of piety and charity, and throws a strong light on two historical facts;—namely,—that the persecution of Gallus was severe;—and, that the Roman Christians bore it with becoming and exemplary fortitude.

"We have been made acquainted, dearest

brother, with the glorious testimonies of your faith and virtue; and we have received the honour of your confession with such exultation, that, in the praises of your excellent conduct, we reckon ourselves partners and companions. For, as we have but one Church, united hearts, and indivisible concord, what pastor rejoices not in the honours of his fellow-pastors as his own? Or what brotherhood does not every where exult in the joy of brothers? We cannot express how great was our joy and gladness when we heard of your prosperous fortitude;—that at Rome you were the leader of the confession, and, moreover, that the confession of the leader strengthened, in the brethren, their disposition to confess;—that while you led the way to glory, you incited many to be companions of your glory; so that we are at a loss which most to celebrate,—your active and steady faith, or the inseparable love of the brethren. The virtue of the bishop in leading the way was publicly admired; while the union of the brethren in following him was proved beyond contradiction: There was but one mind and one voice among you all. The Apostle foresaw, in spirit, this faith and firmness of the whole Roman Church, which have shone so illustriously; and, in praising the primitive fathers, he stirs up their future sons to an imitation of their courage and patience. Your unanimity and perseverance is a great and an instructive example to the brethren. Ye have taught largely the important lesson of fearing God, of firmly adhering to Christ, of uniting pastors with the people, brethren with brethren in one common danger: ye have proved,—that a concord thus formed is invincible;—that the God of peace hears and answers the joint prayers of the peace-makers.—With terrible violence the adversary rushed to attack the soldiers of Christ; but was bravely repulsed.

He had hoped to supplant the servants of God, by finding them, like raw soldiers, unprepared: He had hoped to circumvent a few individuals; but he found them united for resistance: and he learnt,—that the soldiers of Jesus remain on the watch sober and armed for the battle;—that they cannot be conquered;—that they may die; but that they are invincible on this very account, because they fear not death;—that they resist not aggressors, since it is not lawful for them, though innocent, to kill the guilty;^f and lastly,—that they readily give up their life and shed their blood, in order that they may the more quickly depart from an evil world in which wickedness and cruelty rages with so much fierceness. What a glorious spectacle under the immediate eyes of God! What a joy in the sight of Christ and of his Church,

that—not a single soldier, but the whole army together, endured the warfare! Every individual, who heard of this proceeding, has joined in it: How many lapsed are restored by this glorious confession! For now they have stood firm; and, by the very grief of their penitence, are made more magnanimous: Their former fall may now be justly considered as the effect of sudden tremor; but they have returned to their true character: they have collected real faith and strength from the fear of God, and have parted for martyrdom.

As much as possible we earnestly exhort our people not to cease to be prepared for the approaching contest, by watching, fasting, and prayers. These are our celestial arms: these are our fortresses and weapons. Let us remember one another in our supplications: Let us be unanimous and united: and let us relieve our pressures and distresses by mutual charity: And whosoever of us shall first be called hence, let our mutual love in Christ continue; and let us never cease to pray to our merciful Father for all our brethren and our sisters.

Thus ardent was the spirit of Cyprian in the expectation of martyrdom! And so little account did he make of temporal things! And, in this natural and easy manner, did he esteem the dreadful scenes of persecution as matter of joy.

He himself was preserved, for the use of the Church, beyond the life of Gallus, as well as of Decius.—Cornelius died in exile: His faithfulness in suffering for Christ evinces all along whose servant he was;—otherwise, history affords little evidence respecting his character.—The little specimen, which we have of his writings, will induce no one to think highly of his genius or capacity."

It is no wonder that Cyprian, who had seen and known such dreadful devastations under Decius, finding, after a very short interval, the persecution renewed by Gallus, should be tempted to imagine the approach of Antichrist,—the end of the world,—and the day of judgment to be at hand. Sagacious and holy men are never more apt to be deceived than when they attempt to look into futurity. God hath made the present so much the exclusive object of our duty, that he will scarce suffer even his best and wisest servants to gain reputation for skill and foresight by any conjectures concerning the times and the seasons, which he hath reserved in his own power. The persecution of Gallus proved, however, a light one compared with that of Decius. Under very formidable apprehensions of it Cyprian wrote an animating letter to the people of Thibaris.^g The mistaken idea I have mentioned, probably added spirit to the epistle; nevertheless, the

^f A plain proof of the passiveness of Christians, still continued from the Apostolic age, under the most unjust treatment.

^g Epist. 56.

reasoning is solid; and his arguments and the Scriptures, which he quotes, deserve attention in all ages.—A few extracts may gratify the reader.

"I had intended, most dear brethren, and wished,—if circumstances had permitted, agreeably to the desires you have frequently expressed,—myself to have come among you; and, to the best of my poor endeavours, to have strengthened the brotherhood with exhortations. But urgent affairs detain me at Carthage; I cannot make excursions into a country so distant as yours; nor be long absent from my people.—Let these letters then speak for me.

You ought to be well assured, that the day of affliction is at hand; and, that the end of the world and the time of Antichrist is near: We should all stand prepared for the battle, and think only of the glory of eternal life and of the crown of Christian confession. Nor ought we to flatter ourselves that the imminent persecution will resemble the last:—a heavier and more ferocious conflict hangs over us, for which the soldiers of Christ ought to prepare themselves with sound faith and vigorous fortitude; and consider that they daily drink the cup of the blood of Christ, for this reason,—that they themselves may be able to shed their blood for him.—To follow what Christ hath taught and done is to be willing to be found with Christ. As John the Apostle says; "He, that saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself also to walk even as he walked." Thus also the blessed Apostle Paul exhorts and teaches, saying, "We are the sons of God, and if sons, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together." Let no man desire any thing now which belongs to a perishing world; but let him follow Christ, who lives for ever, and who makes his servants to live, if indeed they be settled in the faith of his name. For the time is come, most dear brethren, which our Lord long ago foretold, saying, "The hour is coming, when whosoever killeth you will think he doeth God service." In his usual manner he quotes those Scriptures which relate to persecution: and, doubtless, the force and beauty of them would then be felt and admired, more than they are by us, who, it is to be feared, are apt to speculate upon them at our ease with too much indifference.

Observe how justly he arms their minds against the discouragement which the circumstances of approaching persecution are apt to induce. "Let no one, when he sees our people to be scattered through fear of persecution, be disturbed, because he sees not the brethren collected, nor the bishops employ-

ed among them. We, whose principles allow us to suffer death, but not to inflict it, cannot possibly, in such a season, be all in one place. Wherever, therefore, in those days, by the necessity of the time, any one shall be separated, in body, not in spirit, from the rest of the flock,—let not such an one be moved at the horror of the fight, nor be terrified by the solitude of the desert, while he retreats and lies hid. No man is alone, who has Christ for his companion: No man is without God, who, in his own soul, preserves the temple of God undefiled. The Christian may indeed be assailed by robbers or by wild beasts among the mountains and deserts; he may be afflicted by famine, by cold, and by thirst; he may lose his life in a tempest at sea,—but the SAVIOUR himself watches his faithful soldier fighting in all these various ways; and is ready to bestow the reward which he has promised to give in the resurrection."

He then produces precedents of Scripture-saints, who suffered for God in the most ancient times, and adds, "How shameful must it be for a Christian to be unwilling to suffer when the Master suffered first; to be unwilling to suffer for our own sins, when he, who had no personal sin, suffered for us.¹ The Son of God suffered that he might make us the sons of God:—and, shall not the sons of men be willing to suffer that they may continue to be esteemed the children of God?"

Antichrist is come, but Christ is also at hand.—The enemy rages and is fierce, but the Lord is our defender: and he will avenge our sufferings and our wounds."—He again makes apposite Scripture-quotations.—That from the Apocalypse is remarkable, "If any man worship the beast and his image, &c." Rev. xiv. 9.

"O what a glorious day," continues Cyprian, "will come, when the Lord shall begin to recount his people, and to adjudge their rewards;—to send the guilty into hell;—to condemn our persecutors to the perpetual fire of penal flame;—and to bestow on us the reward of faith and of devotedness to him. What glory! what joy! to be admitted to see God;—to be honoured; to partake of the joy of eternal light and salvation with Christ the Lord your God; to salute Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Patriarchs, and Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs; to joy with the righteous, the friends of God, in the pleasures of immortality!—When that revelation shall come, when the beauty of God shall shine upon us, we shall be as happy as the deserters and rebellious will be miserable in inextinguishable fire."

¹ I have translated this literally. The difference between suffering for our own sins and suffering for us is striking; the first is corrective, the second is by imputation. Cyprian believed the atonement of Christ, and therefore varied his phraseology to prevent mistake.

¹ The daily reception of the Lord's supper appears to have been the practice of the African Church at that time.

Such are the views of the next life which this good bishop sets before Christians.—The palm of heavenly-mindedness belonged to these persecuted saints: and I wish, with all our theological improvements, we may attain to a measure of this zeal amidst the various good things of this life, which as Christians, we at present certainly enjoy.

Lucius was chosen bishop of Rome in the place of Cornelius; but was immediately driven into exile by the authority of Gallus. Cyprian congratulated him both on his promotion and on his sufferings. His exile must have been of short duration. He was permitted to return to Rome in the year two hundred and fifty-two; and a second congratulatory letter was written to him by Cyprian.^a He suffered death soon after; and was succeeded by Stephen.—The episcopal seat at Rome was then, it should seem, the next door to martyrdom.

It was not owing to any diminution of his usual zeal and activity, that the African bishop was still preserved alive, while three of his contemporaries at Rome, Fabian, Cornelius, and Lucian, died a violent death or in exile. About this time he dared to write an epistle to a noted persecutor of those times, named Demetrianus: and, with great freedom and dignity, he exposed the unreasonableness of the pagans in charging the miseries of the times upon the Christians. There will be no necessity to give any detail of his reasonings on the subject:—Paganism has at this day no defenders.—The latter part of the epistle, which is exhortatory and doctrinal, shall be afterwards considered, when we come to make an estimate of Cyprian's theological works.

The short reign of Gallus was distinguished by so large an assemblage of human miseries, as to give a plausible colour to Cyprian's mistake of the near approach of the end of the world. A dreadful pestilence broke out in Africa, which daily carried off numberless persons; and frequently swept away whole houses. The pagans were alarmed beyond measure: They neglected the burial of the dead through fear, and violated the duties of humanity. The bodies of many lay in the streets of Carthage, and in vain seemed to ask the pity of passengers.^b—It was on this occasion,—that the Lord stirred up the spirit of Christians to shew the practical superiority of their religion; and, that Cyprian, in particular, exhibited one of the most brilliant proofs of his real character. He gathered together his people, and expatiated on the subject of mercy. He pointed out to them,—that if they did no more than others,—no more than the heathen and the publican did in shewing mercy to their own, there would be nothing so very admirable in

their conduct;—that Christians ought to overcome evil with good, and, like their heavenly Father, to love their enemies, since he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. Why does not he, who professes himself a son of God, imitate the example of his Father? We ought to answer to our birth, and those, who appear to be born again of God, should not degenerate, but should be solicitous to evidence the genuineness of their relation to God by the imitation of his goodness. Much more than this Pontius tells us was said by him.—But Pontius is always very scanty in his informations.

The eloquent voice of Cyprian, on this occasion as on others, roused the alacrity of his people. The Christians ranked themselves into classes for the purpose of relieving the public distress. The rich contributed largely: the poor gave what they could; namely, their labour with extreme hazard of their lives:—The pagans saw with astonishment the effects of the love of God in Christ; and had a salutary opportunity of contrasting these effects with their own selfishness and inhumanity.

The dreadful calamity of the plague gave to Cyprian an opportunity of impressing on the minds of his people, what in truth had been the ruling object of his own life since his conversion, namely—a warm and active regard for the blessings of immortality, joined with a holy indifference for things below. He published on this occasion his short treatise on mortality. He, who wrote it, must have felt what all have need to feel,—how little a thing life is,—how valuable the prospect of heavenly bliss! The whole of this little tract is very precious; but the reader must be content with a few extracts.

“The kingdom of God, my dearest brethren, shews itself to be just at hand. The reward of life, the joy of eternal salvation, perpetual gladness, and paradise lately lost,—all these things come into our possession now that the world passes away: Heavenly and eternal glories succeed earthly, fading trifles. What room is there for anxiety, solicitude, or sadness, unless faith and hope are wanting? If, indeed, a man be unwilling to go to Christ, or does not believe that he is going to reign with him, such an one has good reason to fear death: For, the “just live by faith.”—Are ye then just; Do ye live by faith; Do ye really believe in the promise of God?—If so,—why do ye not feel secure of the faithfulness of Christ; why do ye not embrace his call, and bless yourselves that ye shall soon be with him, and be no more exposed to Satan?”

He then makes an apposite use of the case of good old Simeon, and adds,
“Our stable peace, our sound tranquillity, our perpetual security is in the world to

^a Epist. 58.

^b Vit. Pont.

come:—In this world we wage a daily war with our spiritual enemies; we have no rest: If one sin be subdued, another is up in arms:—We are continually exposed to temptations; but the divine laws forbid us to yield to them.—Surely, amidst such constant pressures we ought to be joyful in the prospect of hastening to Christ by a speedy departure. How does our Lord himself instruct us on this very head? Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.—Who does not wish to be free from sorrow? Who would not run to take possession of joy? Since then to see Christ is joy, and since our joy cannot be full till we do see HIM,—what blindness, what infatuation is it, to love the penal pressures and tears of the world, and not to be desirous of quickly partaking of that joy which shall never pass away!

The cause of this, dear brethren, is UNBELIEF: We none of us believe really and solidly those things to be true which the God of Truth promises,—whose word is eternally firm to those that put their trust in him. If a man of a grave and respectable character promises you any thing, you do not doubt his performance, because you know him to be faithful. Now God himself speaks with you; and dare you waver in uncertainty? He promises you immortality when ye shall depart out of this world; and will ye still doubt?—This is not to know God: This is to offend, with the sin of unbelief, Christ the Lord and Master of believers:—"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," said the blessed Apostle,—who computed it to be gain indeed,—no longer to be detained in the snares of the world,—no longer to be obnoxious to sin and the flesh,—to be exempt from excruciating pressures,—to be freed from the poisonous jaws of Satan, and—lastly, to go to the joys of eternal salvation upon the call of Christ."

Some of Cyprian's people happened to be staggered in their minds, because they found that Christians were liable to be afflicted with the plague as others: Upon which, the bishop explained to them,—that IN SPIRIT the children of God are indeed separated from the rest of mankind; but that, in all other respects, they are obnoxious to the common evils of human life. In his usual manner he supports his precepts by Scripture-examples; and speaks eloquently and solidly of the benefits of afflictions, and of the opportunity of shewing what spirit they are of. "Let that man fear to die," says he, "who has a second death to undergo; who is not born of water and the spirit; who is not a partaker of the cross and passion of Christ; and whom eternal flame will torment with perpetual punishment. To such an one life is indeed a desirable object, be-

cause it delays his condemnation:—but what have good men to dread from death?—They are called by it to an eternal refreshment.—There is, however, great use in a season of uncommon mortality: It rouses the idle; compels deserters to return; and produces faith in the gentiles: It dismisses and sends to rest many old and faithful servants of God; and it raises fresh and numerous armies for future battles.

We should consider and think again and again, that we have renounced the world and live here as strangers. What stranger loves not to return to his own country? Let us rejoice in the day which summons us to our home.—There, a great number of dear friends await us: What raptures of mutual joy to see and embrace one another."

The active as well as the passive graces of Cyprian were kept in perpetual exercise by various calamities, which happened at no great distance of time from each other. The madness of men has ever been generating the horrors and miseries of war, and there have never been wanting poets and historians to celebrate the praises of those who have most exceeded others in shedding human blood.—It belongs to narrations purely Christian to record, with a modest, yet firm approbation, the actions of holy men, whom the world despises, but whom the grace of God leads to the exercise of real love to God and men.—Mark another instance of Cyprian's truly Christian benevolence. Numidia, the country adjoining to Carthage, had been blessed with the light of the gospel, and a number of Churches were planted in it. By an irruption of the barbarous nations, who neither owned the Roman sway, nor had the least acquaintance with Christianity, many Numidian converts were carried into captivity. Eight bishops, Januarius, Maximus, Proculus, Victor, Modianus, Nemesian, Nampulus, and Honoratus, wrote the mournful account to the prelate at Carthage. What he felt and did on the occasion his own answer will best explain. The love of Christ and the influence of his holy Spirit will appear to have been not small in the African Church from this and from the foregoing case; nor will the calamities of the times and the scourge of persecution seem to have been sent to them in vain."

"With much heart-felt sorrow and tears we read your letters, dearest brethren, which ye wrote to us in the solicitude of your love concerning the captivity of our brethren and sisters. For who would not grieve in such cases? or who would not reckon the grief of his brother his own? since the Apostle Paul says, "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;" and

if one member rejoice, all the other members rejoice with it;" and elsewhere, "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" Therefore now the captivity of our brethren is to be reckoned our captivity; and the grief of those who are in danger is to be reckoned as our own grief, since we are all one body:—Not only our affections, but the religion of Jesus itself ought to incite us to redeem the brethren: For, since the Apostle says, in another place, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" It follows, that even if our love did not induce us to help the brethren, yet, in such circumstances, we ought to consider, that they which are taken, are the temples of God, and that we ought not, by long delay and neglect, to suffer the temples of God to remain in captivity, but to labour with all our might, and quickly to shew our obsequiousness to Christ our Judge, our LORD, and OUR GOD. For whereas Paul the Apostle says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into his death;" Christ is to be viewed as existing in our captive brethren; and HE, who dwells and abides in us, must, by a sum of money, be redeemed from captivity, and snatched from the hands of the barbarians;—HE, who by his cross and blood,* redeemed us from death, and snatched us from the jaws of Satan.—In fact, HE suffers these things to happen, in order that our faith may be tried, and that it may be seen whether we be willing to do for another what every one would wish to be done for himself, were he a prisoner among the barbarians. For who, if he be a father, does not now feel as if his sons were in a state of captivity? Who,—if a husband,—is not affected as if his own wife were in that calamitous situation? This must be the case, if we have but the common sympathy of men.—Then how great ought our mutual sorrow and vexation to be on account of the danger of the virgins who are there held in bondage! Not only their slavery, but the loss of their chastity is to be deplored: the bonds of barbarians are not so much to be dreaded as the lewdness of men, lest the members of Christ dedicated to him, and devoted^o for ever to the honour of continency, should be defiled and insulted by libidinous savages.

Our brethren, ever ready to work the work of God, but now much more quickened by great sorrow and anxiety to forward so salutary a concern, have freely and largely contributed to the relief of the distressed captives. For, whereas the Lord says in the gospel,

* Redemption by the blood of Jesus, union and fellowship with him maintained in the soul by faith, and the returns of love answerable to his loving-kindness, these are the principles of Christian benevolence.

^o Voluntary celibacy, I apprehend, was in growing repute in the Church at that time. St. Paul's advice in the 7th of 1st Cor. had then many followers, but monastic vows had yet no existence.

"I was sick, and ye visited me;" with how much stronger approbation would he say, "I was a captive, and ye redeemed me!" and when again he says, "I was in prison, and ye came to me;" how much more is it in the same spirit to say, "I was in the prison of captivity and lay shut up and bound among barbarians, and ye freed me from the dungeon of slavery: Ye shall receive your reward of the Lord in the day of judgment!"

Truly we thank you very much that ye wished us to be partakers of your solicitude, and of a work so good and necessary;—that ye have offered us fertile fields in which we might deposit the seeds of our hope with an expectation of an exuberant harvest. We have sent a hundred thousand sesterces,—the collection of our clergy and laity^o of the Church of Carthage, which you will dispense forthwith according to your diligence. Heartily do we wish that no such thing may happen again, and that the Lord may protect our brethren from such calamities. But if, to try our faith and love, such afflictions should again befall you, hesitate not to acquaint us; and be assured of the hearty concurrence of our Church with you both in prayer and in cheerful contributions.

That you may remember, in your prayers, our brethren, who have cheerfully contributed,—I have subjoined the names of each;—I have added also the names of our colleagues in the ministry, who were present and contributed, in their own names and in that of the people; and, besides my own proper quantity, I have set down and sent their respective sums. We wish you, brethren, always prosperity."

About this time, Cyprian wrote to an African bishop, named Cæcilius, for the purpose of correcting a practice in the administration of the Lord's Supper, which had crept into some Churches,—of using water instead of wine.—With arguments drawn from the Scriptures, he insists on the necessity of wine in the ordinance, as a proper emblem of the blood of Christ.—But let it suffice to have barely mentioned this subject.

The appointment of Stephen to the bishopric of Rome was soon followed by the death of Gallus; who was slain in the year two hundred and fifty-three, after a wretched reign of eighteen months.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PACIFIC PART OF VALERIAN'S REIGN.

UNDER Gallus the peace of the Church of Christ seems to have been very short and precarious. But his successor Valerian, for

^o About L. 781: 5s. sterling.—See Notes to Epis. 62, Oxford Edit.

upwards of three years, proved their friend and protector. His house was full of Christians, and he appears to have had a strong predilection in their favour.

The Lord exercises his people in various ways. There are virtues adapted to a state of prosperity as well as of adversity.—The wisdom and love of God, in directing the late terrible persecutions, have been plainly made manifest by the excellent fruits.—Let us now attend to the transactions of Christians during this interval of refreshment.

The affairs of Cyprian detain us long, because his eloquent pen continues to attract us; and because we would not lose a faithful and an able guide, till we are compelled to leave him.—Probably, there were many before his time, whose Christian actions would have equally deserved to be commemorated: But the materials of information fail us: The fine compositions of this bishop are still, however, a capital source of historical instruction.

During the tranquillity under the emperor Valerian, a council was held in Africa by sixty-six bishops with Cyprian at their head. The object of this assembly was, doubtless, the regulation of various matters relating to the Church of Christ.—These bishops had, unquestionably, each of them, a small diocese; and with the assistance of their clergy, they superintended their respective jurisdictions according to the primitive mode of Church-government. The face of Africa, which is now covered with Mahometan, idolatrous, and piratical wickedness, afforded in those days a very pleasing spectacle; for we have good reason to believe that a real and salutary regard was paid to the various flocks by their ecclesiastical shepherds. But, we have no particular accounts of the proceedings of this council beyond what is contained in a letter of Cyprian, to which I shall presently advert. He mentions two points, which engaged their attention;—but, it is very likely, that matters of greater importance than either of those points were then reviewed:—The synod was worthy of the name of Christian: many of the bishops then present had faithfully maintained the cause of Christ during scenes of trial the most severe that can be imagined; and I know no ground for suspecting the clergy of those times to have been influenced by schemes of political ambition for increasing their wealth or power.

A presbyter, named Victor, had been re-admitted into the Church without having undergone the legitimate time of trial in a state of penance, and also without the concurrence and consent of the people. His bishop Therapius had done this arbitrarily and contrary to the institutes of the former council for settling such matters. Cyprian, in the name of the council, contents him-

self with reprimanding Therapius; but yet confirms what he had done, and warns him to take care of offending in future.

This is one of the points. And, we see hence that a strict and godly discipline, on the whole, now prevailed in the Church; and that the wisest and most successful methods of recovering the lapsed were used. The authority of bishops was firm, but not despotic: and the share of the people, in matters of ecclesiastical correction and regulation appears worthy of notice.

The other point he thus explains in the same letter addressed to Fidus: "As to the care of infants, of whom you said that they ought not to be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, and that the ancient law of circumcision should be so far adhered to, that they ought not to be baptized till the eighth day, we were all of a very different opinion. We all judged that the mercy and grace of God should be denied to none. For, if the Lord says in his Gospel, "the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them," how ought we to do our utmost, as far as in us lies, that no soul be lost! Spiritual circumcision should not be impeded by carnal circumcision. If, even to the foulest offenders when they afterwards believe, remission of sins is granted, and none is prohibited from baptism and grace; how much more should an infant be admitted;—who, just born, hath not sinned in any respect, except, that being carnally produced according to Adam, he hath, in his first birth, contracted the contagion of the ancient deadly nature;—and who obtains the remission of sins with the less difficulty, because not his own actual guilt, but that of another, is to be remitted?"

Our sentence therefore, dearest brother, in the council was, that none, by us, should be prohibited from baptism and the grace of God who is merciful and kind to all."

I purpose carefully to avoid disputes on subjects of small moment. Yet to omit a word here on a point, which hath produced volumes of strife, might seem almost a studied affectation: On such occasions I shall briefly and pacifically state my own views, as they appear deducible from evidence.

Instead of disputing whether the right of infant-baptism is to be derived from Scripture alone, and whether tradition deserves any attention at all, I would observe,—that the Scripture itself seems to speak for an infant-baptism;—and further, that tradition, in matters of custom and discipline, is of real weight, as appears from the confession of every one; for every one is glad to support his cause by it, if he can:—and, in the present case,—to those who say that the custom of baptizing children was not deriv-

ed from the apostolical ages, the traditional argument may fairly run in language nearly Scriptural, "if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such a custom, neither the Churches of God :"—and we never had any such custom as that of confining baptism to adults.

Here is an assembly of sixty-six pastors, men of approved fidelity and gravity, who have stood the fiery trial of some of the severest persecutions ever known, and who have testified their love to the Lord Jesus Christ, in a more striking manner than any Antipædo-baptists, have had an opportunity of doing in our days; and, if we may judge of their religious views by those of Cyprian, —and they are all in perfect harmony with him,—they are not wanting in any fundamental of godliness. No man in any age more revered the Scriptures, and made more copious use of them on all occasions than he did; and,—it must be confessed,—in the very best manner. For he uses them continually, for PRACTICE, not for OSTENTATION; for USE, not for the sake of VICTORY in argument.—Before this holy assembly a question is brought,—not whether infants should be baptized at all,—none contradicted this,—but whether it is right to baptize them immediately, or on the eighth day. Without a single negative they all determined to baptize them immediately. This transaction passed in the year two hundred and fifty-three. Let the reader consider: If infant-baptism had been an innovation, it must have been now of a considerable standing: The disputes concerning Easter and other very uninteresting points shew, that such an innovation must have formed a remarkable era in the Church. The number of heresies and divisions had been very great. Among them all such a deviation from apostolical practice as this must have been remarked. To me it appears impossible to account for this state of things, but on the footing that it had EVER been allowed; and, therefore, that the custom was that of the first Churches. Though, then, I should wave the argument drawn from that sentence of St. Paul, "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy;"—and yet it is not easy to explain its meaning by any thing else than infant-baptism,—I am under a necessity of concluding, that the antagonists of infant-baptism are mistaken. Yet I see not why they may not serve God in sincerity, as well as those who are differently minded. The greatest evil lies in the want of charity; and in that contentious eagerness, with which singularity, in little things, is apt to be attended. Truly good men have not always been free from this;—perhaps few persons, on the whole, cultivated

larger and more generous views than our African prelate;—yet, in one instance, we shall presently see, he was seduced into a bigotry of spirit not unlike to that which I here disapprove, and, at the same time, greatly lament.

I could have wished that Christian people had never been vexed with a controversy so frivolous as this about baptism: but having, once for all, given my views and the reasons of them, I turn from the subject, and observe further,—that there is, in the extract of the letter before us, a strong and clear testimony of the faith of the ancient Church concerning the doctrine of original sin. One may safely be allowed to reason, on that head, in the same way, as in the case just now considered; but the fulness of Scripture concerning so momentous a point precludes the necessity of traditional arguments. A lover of divine truth will, however, not be displeased to find,—that, without contradiction, Christians in the middle of the third century did believe, that men were born in sin and under the wrath of God through Adam's transgression, and, by their connexion with him as a federal head, were involved in all the consequences of his offence. Such were the sentiments of the ancient Christians in general;—of the very best Christians,—who possessed the Spirit of Christ in the most powerful degree.—The just consequences, which belong to this fact, are seldom attended to by persons who are wise in their own conceit.—"Let us attend," say they, "to right reason,—to modern improvements in the interpretation of Scripture, and let us reject without ceremony the obsolete absurdities of ancient ignorance:—The real practical meaning of which is this: We will torture and twist in every possible direction the most perspicuous passages of holy writ, rather than we will acknowledge them to contain doctrines, which we dislike. —To submit at once to the testimony of the Divine Word is, in itself, the most reasonable thing in the world; but when men will not abide by that;—when they will substitute schemes of their own fancy and invention,—in the place of actual revelation,—and still profess themselves to be under the guidance of the Scriptures, it may then be very expedient to oppose and confute their unwarrantable constructions and criticisms by the unanimous judgment of the primitive Church, who had the best opportunity of knowing the truth.—There is no unprejudiced mind, which will not feel the force of this argument.

The following private case,—which must have happened in time of peace,—and therefore may properly be referred to this period, deserves, on account of the light, which it throws on primitive Christian manners, to be distinctly recorded.

"Cyprian to Eucratius his brother. Health. Your love and esteem have induced you, dearest brother, to consult me as to what I think of the case of a player among you; who still continues to instruct others in that infamous and miserable art, which he himself hath learnt. You ask, whether he should be allowed the continuance of Christian communion? I think it very inconsistent with the majesty of God, and the rules of his gospel, that the modesty and honour of the Church should be defiled by so base and infamous a contagion. In the law¹ men are prohibited to wear female attire, and are pronounced abominable; how much more criminal must it be, not only to put on women's garments, but also to express lascivious, obscene, and effeminate gestures in a way of instructing others!—By these means boys will not be improved in any thing that is good, but absolutely ruined in their morals.

And let no man excuse himself, as having left the theatre, while yet he undertakes to qualify others for the work. You cannot say that the man has ceased from his business, when he provides substitutes in his own place; and furnishes the playhouse with a number of performers instead of one; and teaches them, contrary to the divine ordinances, to confound, in their apparel, the proper and decent distinctions of the sexes; and so gratifies Satan by the defilement of the divine workmanship.—If the man makes poverty his excuse, his necessities may be relieved in the same manner as those of others, who are maintained by the alms of the Church, provided he be content with frugal and simple food, and do not fancy that we are to hire him, by a salary, to cease from sin; since it is not our interest, but his own, that is concerned in this affair. But,—let his gains by the service of the playhouse be ever so large,—What sort of gain is that, which tears men from a participation in the banquet of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and leads them from their miserable and ruinous feasting in this world to the punishments of eternal famine and thirst? Therefore,—if possible,—recover him from this depravity and infamy to the way of innocence and to the hope of life, that he may be content with a parsimonious, but salutary maintenance from the Church. And, if your Church be insufficient to maintain its own poor,² he may transfer himself to us;—and he shall here receive what is necessary for food and raiment:—He must, however, no longer teach his pernicious lessons; but himself endeavour to learn something from the Church that may be useful to his salvation. Dearest son, I wish you constant prosperity."³

The decision of Cyprian is, doubtless, that which piety and good sense would unite to dictate in the case.—A player was ever an infamous character at Rome; and was looked on as incapable of filling any of the offices of state. The Romans, at the same time that they shewed, in this point, the soundness of their political, evinced the depravity of their moral, sense: For there were still maintained by them, at the public expense and for the public amusement, a company of men, who,—they knew,—must of necessity be dissolute and dangerous members of society. If this was the judgment of sober pagans, we need not wonder that the purity of Christianity would not even suffer such characters to be admitted into the bosom of the Church at all. To say, that there are noble sentiments to be found in some dramas, answers not the purpose of those, who would vindicate the entertainments of the stage. The support of them requires a system in its own nature corrupt;—a system, which must gratify the voluptuous and the libidinous, or it can have no durable existence. Hence, in every age, complaints have been made of the licentiousness of the stage; and the necessity of keeping it under proper restraints and regulations has been admitted by its greatest admirers. But it is, I think, a great mistake to suppose that the stage may remain a favourite amusement, and, at the same time, be so regulated as not to offend the modest eyes and ears of a humble Christian. The gravest advocates for the theatre expect pleasure from it rather than instruction: If, therefore, you believe that human nature is corrupt and impure, only ask yourself what sort of dramatic exhibitions and conversations will be most likely to meet with the applause of the people;—and you will soon be led to conclude, that the play-house is and must be a school of impurity.

The first Christians felt the force of this obvious argument, and they rejected the stage entirely.—A Christian, renouncing the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and yet frequenting the playhouse, was with them a solecism.—The effusion of the Holy Spirit, which, during three centuries, we are now reviewing, never admitted these amusements at all.—The profession of the dramatic art—and the profession of Christianity were held to be absolutely inconsistent with each other.

It is one of the main designs of this history to shew, practically, what true Christians were, both in principles and in manners: and, in this view, the case before us is exceedingly instructive.—What would Cyprian have said, to see large assemblies of Christians so called, devoted to these impurities, and supporting them with all their might, and deriving from them the highest delight?—"Such

¹ Deut. xxii. 5.

² Eucratius was the bishop of a place called Thenna, lying in the military road to Carthage.

³ Ep. 61. Pamm.

persons must, certainly, be strangers to the joy of the Holy Ghost; and I cannot but wonder why they choose to retain the name of Christians."—Then, if he had examined their stage entertainments, and compared them with those that were in vogue in his own day,—Would he not have seen the same confusion of sexes,—the same encouragement of unchaste desires, and the same sensuality, with the same contemptuous ridicule of Christianity?—if, indeed, in his time the gospel was ever burlesqued on a stage, as it has, frequently, been in ours.—In some points of lesser consequence, the ancient drama might differ from the modern; but, on the whole, the spirit and tendency was the same; and, doubtless, this excellent bishop would have been astonished to be told, that in a country, which called itself Christian, actors and actresses, and managers of playhouses, amassed large sums of money;—that many exemplary clergymen could scarce find subsistence; and, that theologians of great erudition enlisted in the service of the stage, and obtained applause by writing comments on dramatic poets.

There was a bishop of Assura, named Fortunatus, who had lapsed in the time of persecution, and who, without any marks of repentance, still assumed to himself the episcopal character, and insisted on his being received as such by the clergy and people. This case produced an epistle of Cyprian to the Church,* in which he as strenuously opposes the ambitious claims of the bishop as, in similar circumstances, he had formerly done those of the laity; and he repeats the advice which he had before given to the lapsed, and cautions the people against the reception of him in his former rank and station.—Behold now the strenuous assertor of the right of faithful bishops openly exposing the pretensions of unworthy ones, and instructing the people to guard themselves against such delusions! What effect his epistle had, does not appear: The weight of his character, and the vigour of the discipline then happily prevalent in Africa, make it probable that it had the desired success.

Rogatian, an African bishop, complained to Cyprian and his colleagues assembled in a synod, of the insolent and injurious behaviour of a deacon. Cyprian observes, that he might have done himself justice without taking this step.—He applies the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram to this of the haughty deacon, and takes notice very properly of the humble and unassuming carriage of our Lord toward the impious dignitaries of the Jewish Church. "He taught us," says he, "by his own behaviour towards false pastors, how true ones ought to be fully and regularly honoured."

* Epist. 64.

The following passage is, perhaps, the most striking proof of any in Cyprian's writings, that the ideas of episcopacy were too lofty, even in that age, and that they had insensibly grown with the gradual increase of superstition.—Let it be remarked as a character of the spirit of those times; and as an instance of the effect of that spirit on a mind the most pure and humble.

"Deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose Apostles, that is, bishops and rulers; but that the Apostles, after his ascent into heaven, chose to themselves deacons, as the ministers of their government and of the Church. Now if we dare do any thing against God who makes bishops, then may DEACONS dare to act against us by whom they are appointed."

Even the least offensive part of this comparison is very unseemly: Bishops are, by no means, to be considered in the same light as Apostles.—His next observation is, however, strictly just: "these are the beginnings of heresies, and the attempts of ill-disposed schismatics to please themselves and to despise with haughtiness their superiors:" He proceeds to advise the bishop how to act concerning a turbulent deacon; and he does this with that happy mixture of firmness and charity, of which, by a peculiarly intuitive discernment, he seldom failed to shew himself a master."

Geminus Victor, by his will, appointed Faustinus, a presbyter, a guardian. In an African synod, Cyprian and his colleagues wrote to the Church of Furnæ a protest against the practice.—The clergy were then looked on as men wholly devoted to divine things: secular cares were taken out of their hands as much as possible.—Let this fact, also, be noted as one of the happy effects of the work of the Holy Ghost on the Church.

Novatianism had spread into Gaul; and Marcan, bishop of the Church of Arelate, united himself to the schism. Faustinus, bishop of Lyons, and several other French bishops, wrote to Stephen of Rome on this subject. Faustinus wrote, also, concerning the same matter to Cyprian of Carthage; who, in a letter to Stephen supported the cause of the general Church against the schismatics.—These facts are mentioned, for the purpose of shewing how the gospel which had so gloriously begun at Lyons, in the second century, must now have spread in France to a great degree.—Contentions and schisms usually have no place, till after Christianity has taken deep root.

The same observation may be made respecting the progress of Christianity in Spain; where, by the inscriptions of Cyriac of Ancona, it appears that the light of truth had entered in Nero's time. Two Spanish

* Epist. 66.

* Epist. 67.

bishops, Basilides and Martial, had deservedly lost their pastoral offices in the Church on account of their unfaithfulness in the persecution. Cyprian and his colleagues in council wrote to confirm their deposition: He shews that the people no less than the clergy were bound to abstain from communion with such characters; and he supports his argument by the directions of Moses to the children of Israel, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men." He recommends—that ordinations should be performed in the sight of all the people, that they might all have an opportunity to approve or to condemn the characters of the persons ordained. He takes notice—that, in Africa, the neighbouring bishops used to meet in the place where the new bishop was to be ordained; and, that there he was chosen in the presence of the people themselves, who knew fully the life and conversation of every candidate. He observes—that Sabina, who had been substituted in the room of Basilides, had been ordained in this fair and equitable manner: and he censures Basilides for going to Rome, and for gaining, by deceit, the consent of Stephen to his being re-instated in his former dignity. Cyprian thinks—that his guilt was much aggravated by this conduct: and, in regard to Martial, who, it seems, had defiled himself with pagan abominations; he insists,—that his deposition ought to remain confirmed.

While these things shew the unhappy spirit of human depravity bearing down the most wholesome fences of discipline, they evince, that there existed persons at that time in the Christian world, who exerted themselves,—and that, not without success,—to preserve the purity of the Church.—And, if ever it should please God to affect, with due care and zeal, the hearts of those, who possess the power to reform our own ecclesiastical defects and abuses, better guides and precedents than these,—next to the Scriptures,—will scarcely be found.

In the year two hundred and fifty-four, Pupian, a Christian of distinction in Carthage, by letter accused Cyprian of ruling the Church with imperious sway; and of ejecting members from it with great insolence and haughtiness. The African prelate had presided now during six years, and had signalized himself, equally in persecution and in peace, as the friend of piety, order, and discipline, and had exerted himself, in the use of every temporal and spiritual faculty, solely for the good of the falling and distempered Church: he saw, by this time, the great success of his labours; and, it now behoved him to pay the tax, which eminent virtue ever does pay to slander and to envy.—At last, no doubt, exceedingly irksome and dis-

treasing;—nevertheless, necessary to prevent the risings of pride, and to preserve the most eminent Christian humble before his God. Pupian believed, or affected to believe very unjust rumours, which were circulated against his pastor; and said, that the scruple of conscience, with which he was seized, prevented him from owning the authority of Cyprian. He himself had suffered during the persecution, and had been faithful; but, like Lucian, whom he, probably, resembled both in virtues and weaknesses, he was disgusted at the backwardness of Cyprian in receiving the lapsed: This malcontent heavily complained of his severity, while the Novatian party had separated from their bishop on account of his lenity. The best and wisest characters have ever been most exposed to such inconsistent charges. It does not appear that Pupian was able to raise a second sect of dissenters on opposite grounds to those of the first: and we may hope that he reflected on his error, and returned into a state of reconciliation with his bishop. A few extracts from Cyprian's answer,—for we have not Pupian's letter,—may throw still stronger light on the temper and principles of Cyprian, and afford us some salutary reflections.

To the charge of Pupian—that he was not possessed of humility, he answers thus: "Which of us is most deficient in humility?—I, who daily serve the brethren; and who, with kindness and pleasure, receive every one who comes to the Church; or you, who constitute yourself the bishop of the bishop, and the judge of the judge appointed by God for a certain time? The Lord, in the gospel, when it was said to him, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" still preserving the respect due to the sacerdotal character, said nothing against the high priest, but only cleared his own innocence: and St. Paul, though he might have been justified in using strong language against those who had crucified the Lord, yet answers, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest; for it is written, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

Unless, indeed, you will say—that before the persecution, when you were in communion with me, I was your pastor; but that after the persecution I ceased to be so.—I suppose, then, the persecution exalted you to the high honour of a witness for Christ; and, at the same time, depressed me from my office by a heavy proscription:—yet,—the very edict, which proscribed me, acknowledged my rank as a bishop: Thus, even those, who believed not God who appoints the bishop, credited the devil who proscribed him.

I speak not these things in a way of boast-

* The edict ran thus—"Whoever shall hold or possess any part of the goods of Cæcilius Cyprian, bishop of the Christians," &c.

ing, but with grief; since you set yourself up as a judge of God, and of his Christ, who says to the Apostles,—and, of consequence, to all the bishops, the successors of the Apostles,—“He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me.”—Hence heresies and schism arise and must arise, whenever persons presumptuously despise the authority of the bishop, who alone is the president of the Church:—What arrogance is this,—to call pastors to your cognizance; and unless they be acquitted at your bar,—behold,—the brethren must be pronounced to have been without a bishop for the last six years!

You say your scruples must be solved:—but, Why did not those martyrs, who—full of the Holy Ghost,—suffered for God and his Christ;—Why did not many of my colleagues, and many of the people, who have been illustrious for their sufferings, indulge similar scruples? Must all—as you affirm—who have communicated with me, be considered as polluted, and as having lost the hope of eternal life?—Pupian alone is upright,—inviolable,—holy,—chaste: he must not mix with us: he must dwell solitary in paradise!!”

He then exhorts him to return to the bosom of the Church: but, at the same time, he informs him, that, in the matter of his re-admission he shall be guided by intimations and admonitions from the Lord communicated to him, possibly, by visions, and dreams.—This is a language not unusual in Cyprian: but we know too little of the mode of dispensation which the Church, at that time, was under, to judge accurately concerning it:—certainly the age of miracles had not then ceased: and, certainly, instruction by dreams was very much the method used by God in Scripture:—To reject, therefore, wholly the positive declarations of a man of Cyprian's wisdom and veracity, would be inexcusable temerity.—He, repeatedly, speaks of the Lord's directions revealed to him in the manner above mentioned. If some expressions in the letter be allowed to savour of episcopal haughtiness which was then growing in the Church, the main tenor of it, nevertheless, contains nothing but what Pupian ought to have attended to most seriously. A readiness to believe stories, which tend to calumniate the worthiest pastors, is a snare which Satan has too successfully laid for the members of the Church in all ages: and, doubtless, much greater circumspection is required on this head, than many are disposed to pay. The brotherly fellowship of Churches depends, in a great measure, on their endeavours to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Cyprian concludes in this nervous manner: “I have written these things with a pure conscience, and in the firm reliance on my

God.—You have my letters; I have yours; both will be recited in the day of judgment before the tribunal of Christ.”^a

A controversy now arose among Christians, while the pacific spirit of Valerian continued to protect them, which reflects no honour on any of the parties concerned in it. The question was, whether persons returning from heresies into the Church ought to be re-baptized. The active spirit of Cyprian was employed, partly by a council in Africa, and partly by his letters, in maintaining that the baptism of heretics was null and void; and that, even, Novatian baptism ought to be looked upon in the same light. Stephen, bishop of Rome, maintained, that, if persons had been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, imposition of hands would then be sufficient for their reception into the Church: The point was left undecided, because no party had power to compel others; most Christians, however, have long since agreed with Stephen; and, indeed, it is the voice of good sense as well as of the Church of England,—that the efficacy of a sacrament, rightly administered, depends not on the character of him that ministers it. But the respect which Cyprian, not undeservedly, had acquired by his labours, his sufferings, and his abilities, procured him a much greater degree of strength than either the importance of his cause or the weight of his arguments merited. Even Firmilian of Cappadocia in a long letter supported his side of the question.—This bishop, occasionally, adverts to the case of a woman, who, about twenty-two years before the date of his letter, had professed herself a prophetess, and for a long time had deceived the brethren with her extatic raptures, till one of the exorcists confuted her pretensions. It may be worth while just to have mentioned this fact, as it shews that delusions have ever been raised by Satan to disgrace the work of God. It appears by the same letter,^b—that Stephen behaved with much violence and asperity in the contest;—that he did not even admit to a conference the brethren who came to him from distant parts if they happened to be of Cyprian's opinion;—but that he denied them the common rights of hospitality.—In the course of this controversy Cyprian decided—and certainly with much propriety, that those,^c whose weak state of health did not permit them to be washed in water, were yet sufficiently baptized by being sprinkled:—He observes, that the virtue of baptism ought not to be estimated, in a carnal manner, by the quantity of external apparatus.

How weak, alas, is man!—A peace of three years has set the members of the Church in a flame among themselves,—and for a

^a Epls. 69^b Epls. 75.^c Epls. 76.

matter of trifling import!—And one of the best and wisest men of his day, by zeal for unity and by caution against innovations, is betrayed into the support of an indefensible point of mere ceremony, which tends to the encouragement of superstition and the weakening of brotherly love!—How soon do we forget that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost!”—With what difficulty is the real love of Jesus and its fruits preserved among professors of Christianity! All this proves in the strongest manner,—how mighty and gracious the Lord is in still preserving a Church in the earth;—how dark and corrupt is man;—how active and subtle is Satan;—how precious is that blood which cleanses from all sin;—and how true is that book which contains these salutary doctrines and faithfully describes the misery of man!—How safely may we rely on the way of salvation which it teaches; and how pleasing is the prospect which it exhibits of the Church in heaven!

The reader would justly think the time ill-employed in unravelling the niceties of this trifling controversy.—Besides, our attention is called to more important matter:—God prepares a scourge for his froward children: Persecution lowers again with renewed strength; and Christians are called on to forget their idle internal squabbles, —to humble themselves before HIM,—and to prepare for fresh scenes of horror and desolation.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAST ACTS AND MARTYRDOM OF CYPRIAN.

THE change in the disposition of Valerian towards the Christians, which took place about the year of our Lord two hundred and fifty-seven, is one of the most memorable instances of the instability of human character. In kindness to them he had surpassed all his predecessors. Even from Philip they had not experienced so much courtesy and friendship. His palace had, usually, been full of the followers of Jesus, and was looked on as a sanctuary. But now, after he had reigned three years, he was induced, by his favourite Macrianus to commence a deadly persecution. This man dealt largely in magical enchantments and abominable sacrifices: he slaughtered children, and tore out the intestines of new-born babes. The persecution of Christians was a cruel employment, worthy of a mind so fascinated with diabolical wickedness and folly; and he found in Valerian but too prompt a dis-

ciple. This fresh attack on the servants of Christ began in the year two hundred and fifty-seven, and continued during the remainder of the reign of this emperor;—namely, three years and a half. Stephen of Rome appears to have died a natural death about the beginning of it: For, there is no evidence of his martyrdom; and, therefore, we want the proofs which might, in that case, have been afforded, whether his turbulent and aspiring spirit was really combined with genuine Christian affections.—He was succeeded by Sixtus.

Cyprian, who had escaped two persecutions, was now made the victim of the third,—though by slow degrees, and with circumstances of comparative lenity. Every thing relating to him is so interesting, that it may not be amiss to prosecute his story, in a connected manner, to his death; and to reserve the narrative of other objects of this persecution till afterwards.

He was seized by the servants of Paternus the proconsul of Carthage, and brought into his council-chamber. “The sacred emperors, Valerian and Gallienus,” says Paternus, “have done me the honour to direct letters to me, in which they have decreed, that all men ought to adore the gods whom the Romans adore; and on pain of being slain with the sword if they refuse. I have heard that you despise the worship of the gods;—whence I advise you to consult for yourself and to honour them.” “I am a Christian,” replied the prelate, “and know no god but the one true God, who created heaven and earth, the sea, and all things in them. This God we Christians serve: To him we pray night and day for all men, and even for the emperors.” “You will die the death of a malefactor, if you persevere in this disposition of mind.” “That is a good disposition which fears God,” answered Cyprian, “and therefore it must not be changed.” “It is the will, then, of the princes, that, for the present, you should be banished.” “He is no exile,” replied the bishop, “who has God in his heart, for the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.” Paternus said, “Before you go, tell me,—where are your presbyters: They are said to be in this city?”—With much presence of mind Cyprian reminded him of the edicts made by the best Roman princes against the practice of informers: “They ought not, therefore, to be discovered by me; and you yourselves do not approve of men, who offer themselves voluntarily to you.” “I will make you discover them by torments.” “By me,” the intrepid bishop rejoined, “they shall not be discovered.” “Our princes have ordered that Christians should hold no conventicles; and whoever breaks this rule shall be put to death.”

⁴ Dionysius of Alex.—Euseb. B. 7. C. 10.

⁵ The passion of Cyprian in Pam. Edit.—Fleury’s Hist. B. 7.

"Do what you are ordered," Cyprian calmly replied.

Paternus, however, was not disposed to hurt Cyprian.—Most probably he respected the character of the man, who, by this time, must have been highly esteemed in Africa on account of a shining series of good works.

After having made some ineffectual attempts to work on his fears, he sent him into banishment to Curubis, a little town fifty miles from Carthage, situate by the sea, over against Sicily. The place was healthy, the air good, and, by his own desire, he had private lodgings. The citizens of Curubis, during the eleven months which he lived among them, treated him with great kindness; and he was repeatedly visited by the Christians.—In this short interval Paternus died.

While the exiled prelate remained by the sea-side serving his divine Master in holy meditations and useful actions to the best of his power and opportunity, he was informed that the persecutors had seized nine bishops, with several priests and deacons and a great number of the faithful, even virgins and children; and, after beating them with sticks, had sent them to work in the copper-mines among the mountains. Every one of these bishops had been present at the last council of Carthage; their names were Nemesian, Felix, Lucius, a second Felix, Litteus, Polus, Victor, Jader and Dativus. I cannot account for the milder treatment which Cyprian received from the Roman governors in any other way than by supposing, that an extraordinary and reverential respect was paid to his superior quality, labours, and virtues. Be that as it may, Providence certainly favoured him in a peculiar manner. But his sympathizing spirit could not but be with his brethren:—His sentiments and his feelings are strongly expressed in a letter to Nemesian and the rest.

"Your glory requires, blessed and beloved brethren, that I ought to come and embrace you, were it not that the confession of the same name has confined me also to this place: but if it be forbidden me to come to you in body, I am present with you in spirit and affection; and I endeavour to express my very soul to you in letters.—How do I exult in your honours, and reckon myself a partner with you,—though not in suffering,—yet in the fellowship of love!—How can I hold my peace, when I hear such glorious things of dearest brethren! How hath the Divine dispensations honoured you! Part of you have already finished the course of martyrdom, and are now receiving crowns of righteousness from the Lord; and the rest, as yet in prisons, or in mines and bonds, exhibit, in the tediousness of their afflictions, still greater examples of patience and perseverance, which will arm and strengthen the brethren, at the same time that these long-

continued torments will advance the sufferers to a higher proficiency in Christian glory, and ensure to them a proportional reward in heaven.

In truth,—that the Lord has thus honoured you, affords me no surprise when I reflect on your blameless lives and faithfulness; your firm adherence to the divine ordinance; your integrity, concord, humility, diligence; mercy in cherishing the poor; constancy in defence of the truth; and strictness of Christian discipline:—And, that nothing might be wanting in you as patterns of good works, even now, by confession with the mouth and by suffering with the body, you stir up the minds of the brethren to divine martyrdom, and distinguish yourselves as leaders of eminent goodness; nor do I doubt, but that the flock will imitate their pastors and presidents, and be crowned, in like manner, by our common Lord.—That you have been grievously beaten with clubs, and have been initiated, by that punishment, in Christian confession, is a thing not to be lamented. The body of a Christian trembles not on account of clubs: All his hope is in wood.[†] The servant of Christ acknowledges the emblem of his salvation: Redeemed by a cross of wood to eternal life, by this wood he is advanced to his crown. O happy feet! shackled indeed at present with fetters; ye will quickly finish a glorious journey to Christ!—Let malice and cruelty bind you as they please, ye will soon pass from earth and its sorrows to the kingdom of heaven.—In the mines ye have not a bed on which the body may be refreshed;—nevertheless, Christ is your rest and consolation: Your limbs are fatigued with labour and lie on the ground: but, so to lie down, when you have Christ with you, is no punishment.—Filth and dirt defile your limbs, and ye have no baths at hand; but, remember, ye are inwardly washed from all uncleanness.—Your allowance of bread is but scanty; be it so,—man doth not live by bread alone, but by the word of God. Ye have no proper clothes to defend you from the cold;—but he, who has put on Christ, is clothed abundantly."

He afterwards comforts them, by suitable arguments, under the loss of means of grace and of public worship; and speaks of the Lord as rewarding the patience and fortitude of his saints, which virtues are indeed his own work in their hearts. "For it is of him that we conquer; it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."—He shews, hence, the

[†] I observe, once for all,—that the want of a just classical taste like that of the Augustan age, and the excess of false rhetorical ornaments, appear every where in Cyprian's writings. This was not the defect of the man, but of the times; and the meanness of the pun in this place will be forgiven by all, who relish the preciousness of the doctrine connected with it.

great sin of unbelief—in not trusting him who promises his aid to those who confess him, and in not fearing him who threatens eternal punishment to those who deny him. In conclusion, he begs their earnest prayers,—that he and they may be freed from the snares and the darkness of the world; and that those, who, in the bond of love and peace, had stood together against the injuries of heretics and the pressures of the heathen, might together rejoice in the celestial mansions.⁶

Nemesian and the other bishops returned him an answer full of affection and gratitude, from three different places in which they were confined; and they acknowledge the pecuniary assistance which he had sent them.

Cyprian wrote also to Rogatian the younger, and to other confessors who were in prison,—most probably, at Carthage:—He animates them in his usual manner, “to despise present afflictions through the hope of future joys;” and he speaks with much pleasure of some women and boys who were partners of their sufferings.—He recommends to them the example of the elder Rogatian and of the ever-peaceable and sober Felicissimus,⁷ who had consummated their martyrdom already.

In the year two hundred and sixty Cyprian was permitted to return from exile; and he lived in a garden near Carthage, which was now providentially restored to him, though he had sold it at his first conversion. His liberal spirit would have inclined him once more to sell it for the relief of the needy, if he had not feared lest he should excite the envy of the persecutors. Here he regulated the affairs of the Church and distributed to the poor what he had left. He sent messengers to Rome for the purpose of clearing up certain indistinct information which had been received concerning the persecution having broken out afresh; and he immediately communicated to the brethren⁸ the following facts, namely,—that Valerian had given orders that bishops, presbyters, and deacons should be put to death without delay;—that senators, noblemen, and knights should be degraded and deprived of their property; and, that if they still persisted in being Christians, they should lose their lives;—that women of quality should be deprived of their property and banished;—and that all Cæsar’s freedmen, who should have confessed, should be stripped of their goods, be chained, and sent to work on his estates. These were Valerian’s directions to the senate; and he sent letters, to the same effect, to the governors

of provinces: “These letters,” said Cyprian, “we daily expect to arrive. We stand, however, in the firmness of faith, in patient expectation of suffering, and in humble hope of obtaining, from the Lord’s help and kindness, the crown of eternal life.” He mentions also the daily ferocity with which,—he understood,—the persecution was carried on at Rome in all its horrors: and, he gives a particular instance of it, in the martyrdom of Xystus the bishop.—He begs that the intelligence may be circulated through Africa; “That we may all think of death; but not more of death than of immortality; and, that, in the fulness of faith, we may, rather with joy than with fear, expect the approaching events.”

Galerius Maximus had succeeded Pater-nus in the proconsulate, and Cyprian was daily expected to be sent for. In this awful crisis a number of senators and others, considerable for their offices or their quality, came to him. Ancient friendship melted the minds of some of them toward the man; and they offered to conceal him in country places; but his soul was now thirsting for martyrdom. The uncertainty of tedious banishment could not be agreeable to one, who had had so much experience of that kind; and, Valerian’s law being expressly levelled at men of his character, there seemed little probability left of his being long concealed. Further,—I believe the generous temper of this prelate would have been hurt, if the safety of his former pagan friends had been endangered on his account. He might, therefore, hesitate to accept their offers, though, according to the steady maxims of his conscientious prudence, he would, by no means, do any thing to accelerate his own death. Pontius his deacon tells us,—that in opposition to the intemperate zeal of those who were for giving themselves up to the martyrdom, Cyprian had always, on this head, conscientious fears, lest he should displease God by throwing away his life. In fact, he continued still at Carthage, exhorting the faithful, and wishing, that when he should suffer martyrdom, death might find him thus employed in the service of his God. Being informed, however, that the proconsul, then at Utica, had sent soldiers for him, he was induced to comply, for a season, with the advice of his friends, by retiring to some place of concealment, that he might not suffer at Utica, but,—that if he was called to martyrdom,—he might finish his life among his own people at Carthage: So he states the matter in the last of his letters to the clergy and the people. “Here in this concealment, I wait for the return of the proconsul to Carthage, ready to appear before him, and to say what shall be given me at the hour. Do you, dear brethren,—Do you, agreeably to the instructions you

⁶ Eps. 78, 79, 80.

⁷ He thus distinguishes this humble, patient martyr, from the factious character of the same name, Eps. 81.

⁸ Eps. 82.

have always received from me, continue still and quiet: Let none of you excite any tumult on account of the brethren, or offer himself voluntarily to the Gentiles.—He, who is seized and delivered up, ought to speak: The Lord, who dwells in us, will speak at that hour: Confession rather than profession is our duty.”

The proconsul returned to Carthage, and Cyprian returned to his garden. There he was seized by two officers, who had been sent with soldiers for that purpose. They obliged him to sit between themselves in a chariot; and they conveyed him to a place named Sextus, six miles from Carthage, by the sea-side. The proconsul lodged there on account of indisposition; and he gave orders that Cyprian should be carried back to the house of the chief officer, about the distance of a stadium^k from the prætorium; and—that the consideration of the business should be deferred till the next day.—The news spread through Carthage: The celebrity of the bishop, on account of his good works, drew prodigious crowds to the scene; not only of Christians, but of infidels, who revered eminent virtue in distress.

The chief officer guarded him,—but in a courteous manner; so that he was permitted to have his friends about him as usual. The Christians passed the night in the street before his lodgings; and the benevolence of Cyprian moved him to direct a particular attention to be paid to the young women who were among the multitude. The next day the proconsul sent for Cyprian, who walked to the prætorium attended by a vast concourse of people. The proconsul not yet appearing, he was ordered to wait for him in a private place. He sat down, and being in a great perspiration, a soldier, who had been a Christian, offered him fresh clothes: “Shall we,” says Cyprian, “seek a remedy for that which may last no longer than to-day?” The arrival of the proconsul was announced, and this venerable servant of Christ was brought before him into the judgment-hall.—“Are you Thascius Cyprian?” “I am.” “Are you he whom the Christians call their bishop?” “I am.” “Our princes have ordered you to worship the gods.” “That I will not do.” You would judge better to consult your safety, and not to despise the gods.” “My safety and my strength is Christ the Lord, whom I desire to serve for ever.” “I pity your case,” says the proconsul, “and could wish to consult for you.” “I have no desire,” says the prelate, “that things should be otherwise with me, than that I may adore my God, and hasten to him with all the ardour of my soul;—for the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory

which shall be revealed in us.” The proconsul grew red with anger; and immediately pronounced sentence of death in the following terms:—“You have lived sacrilegiously a long time; you have formed a society of impious conspirators; you have shewn yourself an enemy to the gods and their religion, and have not hearkened to the equitable counsels of our princes; you have ever been a father and a ringleader of the impious sect.—You shall, therefore, be an example to the rest,—that, by the shedding of your blood, they may learn their duty. Let Thascius Cyprian, who refuses to sacrifice to the gods, be put to death by the sword.” “God be praised,” said the martyr; and while they were leading him away, a multitude of the people followed and cried,—“Let us die with our holy bishop.”

A troop of soldiers attended the martyr; and the officers marched on each side of him. They led him into a plain surrounded with trees, and many climbed up to the top of them to see him at a distance. Cyprian took off his mantle, and fell on his knees and worshipped his God: then he put off his inner garment and remained in his shirt.—The executioner being come, Cyprian ordered twenty-five golden denarii to be given to him: he himself bound the napkin over his own eyes; and a presbyter and a deacon tied his hands, and the Christians placed before him napkins and handkerchiefs to receive his blood.—His head was then severed from his body by the sword.^l

His biographer Pontius represents himself as wishing to have died with him; and, as divided between the joy of his victorious martyrdom, and sorrow, that himself was left behind.

Thus,—after an eventful and instructive period of about twelve years since his conversion,—after a variety of toils and exercises among friends, and open foes and nominal Christians, by a death more gentle than commonly fell to the lot of martyrs, rested at length in Jesus the truly magnanimous and benevolent spirit of Cyprian of Carthage.—An extraordinary personage surely! And, one, whose character calls for the most distinct review and illustration in our power!—An attempt of this sort we would make in the next chapter, however imperfect, or inadequate it may prove.—Let writers, whose views are secular, celebrate their heroes, their statesmen, and their philosophers; but let us,—even though a Christian's taste be derided,—at least take advantage of the rare felicity of the present times of civil liberty, and, endeavour, in employing the press, to do some justice to the virtues of men, who, while they lived, “set their affections on things above,” and who, after death,—accord-

^k A hundred and twenty-five paces.

^l Act of his Martyrdom. Passion of Cyprian in Pam. Pontius's Life of Cyprian, and Fleury's History.

ing to modern sentiments of worth and excellence,—are, almost, assigned to contemptuous oblivion.—And, may their memorial be blessed for ever!!

CHAPTER XV.

CYPRIAN COMPARED WITH ORIGEN.

THE east and the west beheld at the same time these two men, in talents, activity, and attainments much superior to the rest of the Christian world. The Roman seems, beyond contradiction, to have much excelled the Grecian in those things in which true Christian virtue consists; yet, as the latter, by the *RAVINS* of his life,—though they were miserably tarnished and clouded by a depraved philosophy,—still claims a just place among saints, it may answer some valuable purpose, not impertinent to the design of this history, to compare, in several particulars, the respective endowments, defects, and excellencies of these extraordinary men.

1. There may have been as pious and holy men as Cyprian, in the interval of time between the Apostles and him, but we have no opportunity of knowing any other Christian so well. The distinct particularity of the accounts concerning him makes his character remarkably deserving of our attention. The dealings of God with a sinner, at his first conversion, often give a strong tincture to the whole future life. Cyprian was intended for very great and important services in the Church; and, those—of an active nature, and attended with an almost uninterrupted series of sufferings;—such as no man could perform to the glory of God, but one, who knew assuredly the ground on which he stood, by a strong work of the divine Spirit on his soul. His experience in conversion he himself describes in his letter to Donatus.—His reception of Christianity was not the effect of mere reasoning or speculation. It was not carried on in a scholastic or philosophical manner, but may truly be said to have been “in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” He felt the doctrines of the gospel,—namely, the grace of God; forgiveness of sins by Jesus Christ; and the influence of the Holy Ghost,—powerful, exuberant, and victorious. His soul was brought into the love of God, and that of the purest kind, tempered ever with humility and godly fear: and it is evident—that he always saw the work to be of God, and beheld nothing in himself as wise, holy, and glorious; and that a spirit of thankfulness for redeeming love, of simple dependence on the divine promises, and, of steady charity to God and man was the result. His race was of no long duration; only about twelve years; and

by far the greater part of the time he was bishop of Carthage. He lived a Christian life; and no part of it was exempt from much labour or much affliction. He seems never to have known what it was to settle into a luke-warm state. The fire which was first kindled in him, burnt serene and steady to the end of his days.—I am aware that Mosheim charges him with an ambitious, domineering spirit, that invaded the rights of the lower clergy and people.^m But I take the liberty of assuring the cautious reader, that this excellent and very judicious *SECULAR* historian, is not to be trusted in his accounts of men of *REAL HOLINESS*. From the most attentive review which I have been able to make of the character of the African prelate, by a repeated perusal of the existing evidence, especially his epistles, I cannot see any thing on which to ground such a censure. He did nothing, in general, without the clergy and people. He was ever sedulous in promoting the good of the whole. The episcopal authority was, in his time, at no very blameable height in the Church: nevertheless, through the gradual growth of superstition, it was, naturally, advancing to an excess of dignity; and it is not to be denied that some few expressions savouring of haughtiness and asperity are to be found in the writings of Cyprian.—But these few expressions were evidently the effect of particular provocation;—nor is there the least evidence that ambition was his vice. Candour would rather say, he was, in general, influenced by a very fervent zeal, supported in its exertions by a temper remarkably active and sanguine. But, whoever looks into the original records with an expectation of finding any thing selfish, proud, or domineering in his general conduct, will be disappointed; and, on the contrary, will be struck with the steady tenor of gentleness, charity, and humility. In fine, if he had not been a *CHRISTIAN*, one might have held him forth to the world as a *GREAT* man;—if it be the part of a great man to unite, in a large and capacious mind, many virtues, and each of them in a high degree of perfection;—virtues too, which are opposite in their nature, and which rarely meet in firm consistence in the same subject;—for example, vigour and mildness, magnanimity and mercy, fortitude and prudence, warmth of temper and accuracy of judgment, and, above all,—zeal and discretion.

In Origen's conversion we see nothing remarkable. He received Christianity in a way of education, rather than by quick, lively, and decisive operations of the Holy Spirit. It is not usual with God to make use of such persons for extraordinary services, like those for which Cyprian, in the prime of life, appears to have been selected

^m Eccles. History, Century 3, Chap. 2.

from the world. Origen's views of the peculiar truths of Christianity were,—to say no more, too faint and general;—nor ever sufficiently distinguished from moral and philosophical religion. He bore persecution, when young, with much zeal and honesty; but he lived many years in peace and prosperity. Much respected and sought after by philosophers, highly esteemed and honoured by courts and by the great, he lived a scholastic rather than an active life in the Church; always fully employed indeed, but more like a man of letters than a minister of the gospel; ever bent on promoting truth and holiness so far as he knew them; but always leaving one's mind dissatisfied on account of the defectiveness of his views. His last scenes are the most satisfactory and the most decisively Christian. He suffered persecution with the patience and honesty of a martyr; and proved indeed whose disciple he was on the whole. Mosheim charges him with dishonesty in his arguments against Celsus; and says that any one that has penetration and judgment may discern it.* It would have been more to the purpose to have pointed out the instances of dishonest argumentation, which he alludes to. My examination of the tract in question induces me to dissent from this learned historian; and further, I am convinced that great uprightness of mind was a ruling feature in Origen's character.—But it is not the practice of modern writers to be candid in their judgment of the ancient Christians.

After this general review of these two men, and, after it has been admitted that integrity and fairness of mind were possessed by both in a very great degree, it may be natural to ask—In what consisted the superior excellence of Cyprian?—The general answer to such an inquiry is—The manner of their first conversion has appeared to have been strikingly different in the two cases; and still more so—The work of God upon their hearts afterwards.—But besides this,—

2. Cyprian was possessed of a simplicity of TASTE to which Origen seems ever to have been a stranger. By simplicity of taste I mean here a genuine and unadulterated relish for the doctrine and spirit of the Christian religion, just as it stands in its real nature. It is possible for a person very eminent in this gift,—which is purely divine and spiritual,—to be, in no way, remarkable for his knowledge of evangelical truth: In respect of knowledge he may not much exceed another who is far his inferior in the former grace of the Spirit: The light and means of information are very different in different ages of the Church; and it is evi-

dent that the third century suffered a decline in illumination. But where a man is deficient in knowledge, yet if his simplicity of Christian taste be very great, he will be silent on those subjects which he does not understand, or at least he will be extremely cautious in opposing any part of divine truth. This was Cyprian's case. He appears not, for instance, to have understood the doctrine of the election of grace. Since Justin's days the knowledge of that article of faith was departing from the Church.—But, he opposed it not.—Origen, less humble and less submissive to divine instruction, and feeling more resources in his reasoning powers, dares to oppose it by a contrary statement.†

In Cyprian this simplicity appears in a supreme degree.—He never trifles with Scripture, or sets up his reason against it. Unencumbered with the apparatus of Grecian philosophy, and possessed of what is much better,—plain good sense, he takes, always, the words of Scripture in their obvious, and most natural meaning; and thinks he has sufficiently proved his point, when he has supported it by an apposite quotation. His humble spirit bows to the divine word: and hence faith, patience, charity, heavenly-mindedness, have full dominion in his soul: and hence also, his sentiments have a strength, a purity, a perspicuity, peculiarly the property of those whose religious taste is altogether scriptural. Here it is that Cyprian and Origen are diametrically opposite to each other. The latter is full of endless allegorical interpretations, and of platonic notions concerning the soul of the world, the transmigration of spirits, free-will, and the pre-existence of souls. The first and simple sense of Scripture he too often ventures to reject entirely.‡ David's sin in the affair of Uriah he cannot admit. It seems, he had not such strong and palpable proof of his own innate depravity, as to suppose it possible for so good a man to fall so fully. He has recourse, therefore, to a hidden and abstruse sense. His numberless comments on Scripture constitute a system of fanciful allegory, which pervades the whole of the sacred oracles: The just and plain sense is much neglected; and the whole is covered with thick clouds of mysticism and chimerical philosophy. He labours, it is true, to support the faith, which was once delivered to the saints; but, like his platonic master Ammonius, he introduces large quantities of figurative trash, which will not incorporate with Christian doctrine.—Thus, by accommodating his interpretations to the then reigning literary taste, he gained to himself, indeed, a celebrity of character among the heathen, even among the great

* Mosheim's Eccl. History Century 3, Chap. 5.

† Philocalia xxi.

‡ Philoc. Chap. i, page 20.

and noble, but threw all things into inextricable ambiguity.—His quickness of parts and his superior ingenuity served only to entangle him more effectually, and to enable him to move in the chaos of his own formation with an ease and rapidity that rendered him unconscious of the difficulties in which he had involved himself.

One remarkable consequence of this difference of character was, that while Origen, among the pagans, succeeded in gaining the favour of the great, and was heard by them with patience, Cyprian could not be endured in his preaching or writings,—except by real Christians.—Another consequence is this,—It is no easy thing to vindicate the soundness of the former in Christian principles:—The latter challenges the severest scrutiny.—He is Christian throughout.

Such is the difference between a man of simplicity and a man of philosophy in religion; and the mind, on this occasion, is led to compare the effect of a philosophical and of a philological spirit. Origen had the former, Cyprian the latter. Eloquence was an distinguishing accomplishment; and he possessed all the powers of it in a very high degree, according to the taste of the age,—which was far from being the best. And here, I would humbly submit to the consideration of the pious and well disposed,—whether the knowledge of grammar, history, criticism, and of oratory, theoretical and practical, properly regulated by common sense and in subordination to divine grace, be not much less dangerous, and, in their way, more useful endowments for a minister of Christ than deep researches into philosophy of any kind?—Far, very far, from meaning to insinuate that the studies of metaphysics and of natural philosophy should be entirely excluded from the education of persons, who mean to be pastors,—I would be understood to suggest,—that a less proportion of THESE and a greater proportion of THOSE than what agrees with the present fashionable taste, might be more advantageous to the Church. The reasoning powers might find in the former an useful exercise and improvement, without the same danger of presumption which so strongly adheres to the latter.¹

3. Having compared the lives and the tempers of these men, let us now view the principles of each. Of Cyprian, after the many quotations already given from his writings, little need be added. Nevertheless, as it has lain more in our way to consider him as addressing Christians than pagans or infidels, I shall select a letter of his to Demetrian, a persecutor of Christians in Africa, in which his manner of preaching to

men altogether profane and unconverted is observable.

He denounces to them the plain threatenings of eternal punishment. "There remains hereafter" an eternal prison, constant flame, and perpetual punishment. There the groans of supplicants will not be heard, because here they disregarded the terror of God's indignation." He bids them solemnly look into themselves, and appeals to the conscience as affording full proof of guilt before God. And he aggravates the charge of condemnation; because, amidst the miseries of the times, men did not repent. After exposing the folly of idolatry, and exhibiting, in lively colours, the all-important scenes of the last judgment, he concludes with this Christian exhortation, which is introduced in the true taste and order of things, after he had first denounced the terrors of the law. "Provide then for your security and life, while you may. We offer you the most salutary counsel; and because we are forbidden to hate you or to requite evil, we exhort you, while there is time, to please God and to emerge from the profound night of superstition into the fair light of true religion. We envy not your advantages, nor do we hide the divine benefits. We return good will for your hatred; and, for the torments and punishments, which are inflicted upon us, we shew you the paths of salvation.—Believe and live; and do ye, who persecute us for a time, rejoice with us for ever. When you depart hence, there will be no room for repentance: no method of being reconciled to God: here, eternal life is either lost or secured; here, by the worship of God and the fruit of faith, provision is made for eternal salvation:—and let no man be retarded, either by his sins or by his years, from coming to obtain it. No repentance is too late, while a man remains in this world.

An access lies open to the grace of God; and, to those, who seek and understand the truth, the access is easy. Even, in the very exit of life, pray for remission of sins, and implore the only living and true God with confession and faith: Pardon is granted to him who confesses his sin; and saving grace from the divine goodness is conferred on the believer; and, thus may a man pass from death to immortality in his very last moments. By subduing death through the trophy of his cross, by redeeming the believer with the price of his blood, by reconciling man to God the Father, and by quickening the dead with celestial regeneration, Christ imparts to us these great mercies. HIM, if it be possible, let us all follow;—let us be baptised in his name. He opens to us the way of life; he brings us

¹ These sentiments are certainly favoured by the comparison of Cyprian and Origen.—It is true, this is only a single instance of such comparison:—but, I believe, it will be very difficult to find examples of a contrary tendency.

back to paradise. He leads us to the heavenly kingdom: and we shall always live with him. By him made sons of God, we shall rejoice with him for ever: Redeemed by his blood, we shall be Christians with Christ in glory: we shall be the blessed of God the Father; and shall give him thanks to all eternity.—The man, who was obnoxious to death, and has been made a sure partaker of immortality, cannot but be filled with joy and gratitude for evermore.”

With such an affectionate spirit, and with such clearness of doctrine did Cyprian preach justification, BY FAITH ONLY, to the unconverted. It must not be denied,—that, in his address to men, who had already “tasted that the Lord is gracious,” there is not the same degree of evangelical purity. In his *Opere* and *Eleemosynis*, he says very excellent things on the duty of alms-giving: but he sometimes uses language that might easily be construed into the language of merit; and as he had not learnt to distinguish the Apocrypha from the Old Testament, he supports his ideas with quotations from *Tobit* and *Ecclesiasticus*. We have had,—what he had not,—an experience, of the evil tendency of any expressions which, in the smallest degree, countenance the supposition of the efficacy of human works in washing away the pollution of sin, whether contracted before or after baptism. We know too, from the dependence on divine grace and on the Spirit's illumination, which Cyprian and many other fathers of the same stamp habitually exercised,—besides the testimony of their holy lives,—that the same expressions mean not with them what they do in the mouths of moderns, full of self-righteousness and of contempt both of the grace of Christ and of the work of the Holy Ghost. We are sure, that the former mean no opposition to the free gift of God, because they are humble: whereas, it is but too evident, that the latter do,—because they are proud and scorn the whole work of the Spirit of God in the New Birth. It had been well, however, if saints had never given a handle to the profane to adulterate the doctrines of the gospel. But I have before observed that Cyprian's views of grace were not equally clear with those of the first Christians: Yet, in every fundamental principle, he speaks as the Oracles of God; and in his addresses to Pagans, Christians, or Jews, he is always fervent and zealous. His *Tract on Patience*, as a practical performance, and that on the Lord's Prayer, as a doctrinal one, deserve the highest praise. In general, his works are excellent in their kind, and he must have a poor taste indeed in godliness who will not find the perusal of them refreshing to his soul. Nevertheless, Cyprian shines much more in practical than in speculative divinity. The shortness of his Christian life and the

pressure of his employments will easily account for this.

I wish it were as easy to clear the doctrinal character of Origen from reproach. The ancients themselves were much divided in their views of his opinion concerning the Son of God. It is certain that the Arians of the fourth century seemed to receive some countenance from him; and men, who had so very little assistance from precedents, were glad to catch at the shadow of an argument drawn from his illustrious name.—But what, if his Arianism were indeed full and confessed on all hands,—What would such a fact avail as an argument,—I say, not against the Scriptures,—but against the joint consent of the whole Church for three hundred years? Even the very opposition made against his character by many, shews how zealous the Church had ever been in the defence of the doctrine of the Trinity.—Here is open a wide field of controversy; but little profit is to be expected from traversing it.—The writings of Origen against *Celsus*, in which he ably defends Christianity against philosophy and paganism, and the *Philocalia* of the same author furnish sufficiently decisive passages against Arias tenets,—if they were not embarrassed by others of a more doubtful cast.

It is probable, however, that one, who thought so rapidly, wrote so much, and had his eyes so steadily fixed on his philosophy, must have dropt many things, which he would not have seriously maintained if he had ever carefully reviewed them. That he never meant to hold any thing different from the general creed, may be inferred from the pains which he took against heretics, as well as from his general character. His erroneous sentences, therefore, ought to be considered as containing queries and conjectures rather than settled opinions. *Athanasius* must be allowed to have been a judge of this matter; and HE believed him to be sound, and quoted his writings to prove our Lord's co-eternity and co-essentiality with the Father.—And he, likewise, observes,—that what things Origen wrote by way of controversy and disputation are not to be looked on as his own sentiments.

After all, the best defence of this great man consists in the general holiness of his life, and in his patient suffering for the faith of Christ in old age: And I rejoice that, amidst all the trash with which his writings abound, we have yet this unquestionable testimony,—that he kept the commandments of God, and had the faith of Jesus. The loss of his voluminous commentaries, and of his other numerous works is, perhaps, not much to be regretted. There are two sentences^{*}

* *Cave's* Life of Origen.

* See *Bishop Beveridge* on the Articles of the Church of England.

in them which merit particular attention. He thus speaks on the words, Rom. iii. "we conclude that a man is justified by faith, &c. "THE JUSTIFICATION OF FAITH ONLY IS SUFFICIENT; SO THAT IF ANY PERSON ONLY BELIEV., HE MAY BE JUSTIFIED, THOUGH NO GOOD WORK HATH BEEN FULFILLED BY HIM;"—and again, on the case of the penitent thief, "he was justified by faith without the works of the law; because, concerning these, the Lord did not inquire what he had done before; neither did he stay to ask what work he was purposing to perform after he had believed;—but, the man being justified by his confession only, Jesus, who was going to paradise, took him as a companion and carried him there."

Thus, the precious doctrine of justification, though much sullied and covered with rubbish, was yet alive, in the third century, even in the faith of the most dubious characters among the Ante-nicene fathers. This it was that kept Origen, with all "his hay and stubble," firm on Christian foundations, and distinguished him radically from an adversary of Christ.

4. If we compare the public life of these two men, the Grecian shines in a scholastic, the Roman in a pastoral capacity. Origen appears as an author, and moves in a sphere calculated for the learned. Cyprian is a preacher, and, like the Apostles, addresses equally all sorts of men. The latter, on account of the pride of corrupt nature, was most likely to be regarded by the poor: He valued not refinement of composition: His aim was to reach the heart and the conscience, and to reduce every religious consideration to real practice. Origen, however, was usefully employed in untying knotty speculations, in refuting heresies, and in recommending Christianity, or something like Christianity, to the learned world. No doubt, his labours would be of some advantage amidst the mischief, which the accommodating scheme produced; but the pastoral exhortations of Cyprian, as they would not be received at all by prejudiced philosophers, so, where they were received, left effects of unadulterated piety, through the divine influence that attended them. As a Christian bishop, scarcely any age has seen his superior—in activity, disinterestedness, and steady attention to discipline: He was equally remote from the extremes of negligent remissness, and impracticable severity: and he possessed a charity and a patience unwearied, and ever consistent. He may safely be recommended as a model to all pastors, and particularly to those of rank and dignity throughout Christendom. Whoever feels a desire to serve God in the most arduous and the most important of all professions, may, probably,—next after the study of the sacred oracles, give days and nights to Cy-

prian's writings.—All his genuine compositions,—if you except his correspondence and controversy with Stephen of Rome,—deserve a diligent perusal; yet no man must be expected to relish them thoroughly, unless he himself has experienced the new-birth unto righteousness: A truly regenerated person will not only relish them, but also will not fail to be affected with a generous glow of the purest godliness upon reading them with care and attention.—The frequency of such bishops in Europe is devoutly to be wished! What avail good sense, taste, learning, without Christian simplicity—and a heart above the world, its flatteries or its frowns!—Contemplate—study the character of the prelate of Carthage, and you will learn what Christian bishops once were, and what they still ought to be.

5. But the chief point of view, in which the contrast between these two persons is most striking, is in the consequences and fruits of their labours and their writings. Before Cyprian's time Africa appears to have been in no very flourishing state with respect to Christianity. Within twelve years he was the instrument of most material service in recovering many apostates, in reforming discipline, and in reviving the essence of godliness. His example was most powerful and effectual among them for ages. The honours paid to his memory demonstrate this: Moreover it is certain, that his diocese, once the scene of Punic greatness, continued, long after, one of the most precious gardens of Christianity, as I shall have abundant occasion to shew in the course of this history,—if I should be permitted to continue it.—But the mischiefs of Origen's taste and spirit in religion were inexpressible.—Talents and learning are coveted by mankind; he, however, who possesses much of them, has the more abundant need to learn humility and divine caution. For, if he do not evidently benefit mankind by them, he is in danger of doing much mischief.—No man, not altogether unsound and hypocritical, ever injured the Church of Christ more than Origen did. From the fanciful mode of allegory, introduced by him, and uncontrolled by Scriptural rule and order, arose a vitiated method of commenting on the sacred pages; which has been succeeded by the contrary extreme—namely, a contempt of types and figures altogether: and, in a similar way, his fanciful ideas of LETTER and SPIRIT tended to remove from men's minds all just conceptions of genuine spirituality.—A thick mist for ages pervaded the Christian world, supported and strengthened by his absurd allegorical manner of interpretation. The learned alone were considered as guides implicitly to be followed; and the vulgar,—when the literal sense was hissed off the stage,—had nothing to do but to follow their authority

wherever it might conduct them.—It was not till the days of Luther and Melancthon, that this evil was fairly and successfully opposed.

If I have carried the parallel to a greater length than the just laws of history allow, the importance of the case is my apology. Let the whole be attentively weighed by the serious reader, in connexion with two passages of St. Paul: the first of which is,—“I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, lest your minds be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ;”—and the second—“Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”

CHAPTER XVI.

OTHER PARTICULARS OF VALERIAN'S PERSECUTION.

It has been already mentioned, that Cyprian heard of the death of Sixtus, bishop of Rome, a little before his own martyrdom. In pursuance of the cruel orders of Valerian, for carrying on the persecution, that prelate had been seized with some of his clergy. While they were carrying him to execution, Laurentius, his chief deacon, followed him weeping, and said, “Whither goest thou, Father, without thy son?” Sextus said, “You shall follow me in three days.” We may suppose him to have been possessed with the spirit of prophecy in saying this, because we are certain that miraculous gifts were as yet by no means extinct in the Church: But, perhaps, the declaration was not out of the reach of common sagacity from the circumstances of affairs.

After Sixtus's death, the Prefect of Rome, moved by an idle report of the immense riches of the Roman Church, sent for Laurentius, and ordered him to deliver them up. Laurentius replied, “Give me a little time to set every thing in order, and to take an account of each particular.” The Prefect granted him three days time. In that space Laurentius collected all the poor who were supported by the Roman Church, and going to the Prefect, said, “Come, behold the riches of our God; you shall see a large court full of golden vessels.” The Prefect followed him, but, seeing all the poor people, he turned to Laurentius with looks full of anger. “What are you displeased at?” said the martyr;—“The gold, you so eagerly desire, is but a vile metal taken out of the earth, and serves as an incitement to all sorts of crimes: The true gold is that Light whose disciples these poor men are. The misery of their bodies is an advantage

to their souls: Sin is the real disease of mankind: The great ones of the earth are the truly poor and contemptible. These are the treasures which I promised you; to which I will add precious stones.—Behold these virgins and widows, they are the Church's crown; make use of these riches for the advantage of Rome, of the emperor, and of yourself.”

Doubtless, if the Prefect's mind had been at all disposed to receive an instructive lesson, he would have met with one here. The liberality of Christians in maintaining a great number of objects, and in looking for no recompense but that which shall take place at the resurrection of the just, while they patiently bore affliction, and humbly rested on an unseen Saviour, was perfectly agreeable to the mind of HIM, who bids his disciples, in a well-known parable, to relieve those, who cannot recompense them.* How glorious was this scene! at a time when the rest of the world were tearing one another in pieces, and when philosophers made not the slightest attempts to alleviate the miseries of their fellow-creatures!—But, as the persecutors would not hear the doctrines explained, so neither would they see the precepts exemplified with patience. “Do ye mock me?” cries the Prefect; “I know, ye value yourselves for contemning death, and therefore ye shall not die at once.” Then he caused Laurentius to be stripped, extended, and fastened to a gridiron, and, in that manner, to be broiled to death by a slow fire. When he had continued a considerable time with one side to the fire, he said to the Prefect, “Let me be turned, I am sufficiently broiled on one side.” And when they had turned him, he looked up to heaven and prayed for the conversion of Rome; and then gave up the ghost!

I give this story at some length, because it has sufficient marks of credibility, and is supported by the evidence of Augustine.—I am not disposed to follow Fleury in various other narratives. In subjects of martyrology this author seems directly opposite to our countryman Gibbon. Whatever judgment these historians possessed, remained, in this matter, equally unexercised by both: Indiscriminate incredulity is as blind as indiscriminate belief.—I may not always succeed, but I certainly endeavour to separate truth from fiction, and neither to impose on my readers or on myself.

At Cæsarea in Cappadocia, a child named Cyril, shewed uncommon fortitude. He called on the name of Jesus Christ continually, nor could threats or blows prevent him from openly avowing Christianity.—Several children of the same age persecuted him; and his own father, with the applauses

* Aug. Vol. 9, p. 52.—See Fleury, B. 7.

† Luke xiv. 12—15.

of many persons for his zeal in the support of paganism, drove him out of his house.

The judge ordered him to be brought before him, and said, "My child, I will pardon your faults; and your father shall receive you again: It is in your power to enjoy your father's estate, provided you are wise, and take care of your own interest." "I rejoice to bear your reproaches," replied the child;—"God will receive me: I am not sorry that I am expelled out of our house: I shall have a better mansion: I fear not death, because it will introduce me into a better life." Divine grace having enabled him to witness this good confession, he was ordered to be bound and led, as it were, to execution. The judge had given secret orders to bring him back again, hoping that the sight of the fire might overcome his resolution. Cyril remained inflexible. The humanity of the judge induced him still to continue his remonstrances. "Your fire and your sword," says the young martyr, "are insignificant. I go to a better house; I go to more excellent riches: Dispatch me presently, that I may enjoy them." The spectators wept through compassion. "Ye should rather rejoice," says he, "in conducting me to punishment. Ye know not what a city I am going to inhabit, nor what is my hope." Thus he went to his death, and was the admiration of the whole city.—Such an example illustrates well that Scripture,—“Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength.”

There were at Antioch a presbyter and a layman, the former named Sappricius, the latter Nicephorus, who through some misunderstanding, after a remarkable intimacy, became so completely estranged, that they would not even salute each other in the street. Nicephorus after a time relented, begged forgiveness of his fault, and took repeated measures to procure reconciliation,—but in vain. He even ran to the house of Sappricius, and throwing himself at his feet, entreated his forgiveness for the Lord's sake:—the presbyter continued obstinate.

In this situation of things the persecution of Valerian reached them suddenly. Sappricius was carried before the governor, and ordered to sacrifice in obedience to the edicts of the emperors. "We Christians," replied Sappricius, "acknowledge for our King Jesus Christ, who is the true God, and the Creator of heaven and earth.—Perish idols, which can do neither good nor harm!" The Prefect tormented him a long time, and then commanded that he should be beheaded. Nicephorus, hearing of this, runs up to him, as he is led to execution, and renews, in vain the same supplications. The executioners deride his humility as perfect folly. But he perseveres, and attends Sappricius to the place of execution. There he says fur-

ther, It is written, "Aak, and it shall be given you."—But, not even the mention of the word of God itself, so suitable to Sappricius's own circumstances, could affect his obstinate and unforgiving temper.

Sappricius, however, suddenly forsaken of God, recants, and promises to sacrifice. Nicephorus, amazed, exhorts him to the contrary, but in vain. He, then, says to the executioners, "I believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ whom he hath renounced." The officers return to give an account to the governor, who ordered Nicephorus to be beheaded.*

The account ends here:—but if Sappricius lived to repent, as I hope he did, he might learn what a dangerous thing it is for a miserable mortal, whose sufficiency and perseverance rest entirely on divine grace, to despise, condemn, or exult over his brother. The last became the first:—and God shewed his people wonderfully by this case, that he will support them in their sufferings for his name; but that, at the same time, he would have them to be humble, meek, and forgiving. This is the first instance I have seen of a man attempting to suffer for Christ on philosophical grounds;—and it failed: Self-sufficiency and pure Christianity are, in their nature, distinct and opposite:—Let no man attempt to unite or mix together such heterogeneous and jarring principles.

It appears, that Christian fortitude is a very different thing from the steady pride of a philosopher, or the sullen patience of an Indian; and, that it cannot even subsist in the absence of Christian meekness and charity.—Philosophers and savages without the least supernatural help, have, frequently, maintained a hardy and unconquerable spirit amidst the highest gratifications of malice and ferocity. But, the event of this story may teach the infidel,—that he has no reason to exult in such instances,—that the spirit of suffering for Christ is, in its kind, a quite different thing,—that it is above mere human nature,—that it is wrought in the heart by divine grace,—and, that it cannot subsist if the Spirit of God be provoked to leave the sufferer.

Dionysius of Alexandria, whom divine providence had so remarkably preserved in the Decian persecution, lived to suffer much also in this;—but not to death. Eusebius has preserved some extracts of his writings, which not only prove this fact beyond dispute, but also throw considerable light on the effects of Valerian's persecution in Egypt.*

This bishop, with his presbyter Maximus, three deacons, and a Roman Christian was brought before Æmilian the Prefect, and

* Fleury, Book 7. Acta sincera, 255, 254.
* Book 7. Chap. x.

was ordered to recant: At the same time, it was observed, that his doing so might have a good effect on others.—He answered, “We ought to obey God rather than man; I worship God who alone ought to be worshipped.” “Hear the clemency of the emperor,” says Æmilian: “You are all pardoned, provided you return to a natural duty:—Adore the gods who guard the empire, and forsake those things which are contrary to nature.” Dionysius answered, “All men do not worship the same gods, but men worship variously according to their sentiments. But we worship the ONE God, the maker of all things, who gave the empire to the most clement emperors Valerian and Gallienus; and to him we pour out incessant prayers for their prosperous administration.” “What can be the meaning,” says Æmilian, “why ye may not still adore that God of yours,—on supposition that he is a God—in conjunction with our gods?” Dionysius answered,—“We worship no other God.”

From this remarkable question of the Prefect, it is evident, that men might have been tolerated in the worship of Jesus, if they had allowed idolaters also to be right in the main, by associating idols with the true God. The firmness of Christians, in this respect, provoked their enemies. The dislike, at this day, of the pure gospel of Christ, arises from a similar cause: Men are condemned as bigots, because they cannot allow the world at large to be right in the eyes of God.

Æmilian banished them all to a village near the desert, called Cephro. And thither Dionysius, though sickly, was constrained to depart immediately. “And truly,” says Dionysius, “we are not absent from the Church; for I still gather such as are in the city as if I were present:—absent indeed in body, but present in spirit. And there continued with us, in Cephro, a great congregation, partly of the brethren which followed us from Alexandria, and partly of them which came from Egypt. And there God opened a door to me to speak his word. Yet, at the beginning, we suffered persecution and were stoned; but, at length, not a few of the pagans forsook their idols and were converted. For, here, we had an opportunity to preach the word of God to a people who had never heard it before. And God, that brought us among them, removed us to another place, after our ministry was there completed. As soon as I heard that Æmilian had ordered us to depart from Cephro, I undertook my journey cheerfully, though I did not know whither we were to go; but, upon being informed that Colluthio was the place, I felt much distress; because it was reported to be a situation destitute of all the comforts of society, exposed to the tumults of travellers and infested by thieves, My

companions well remember the effect this had on my mind. I proclaim my own shame: At first I grieved immediately. It was a consolation, however, that it was nigh to a city. I was in hopes from the nearness of the city, that we might enjoy the company of dear brethren; and that particular assemblies for divine worship might be established in the suburbs, which indeed came to pass.”

Amidst this scantiness of information conveyed in no great perspicuity or beauty of style, as it appears, however, that the Lord was with Dionysius and caused his sufferings to tend to the furtherance of the gospel.—His confession of his own heaviness of mind does honour to his ingenuousness: and the strength of Christ was made perfect in his weakness.

In another epistle, he gives a brief account of the afflictions of others:—It deserves to be transcribed as a monument of the greatness and the violence of Valerian's persecution.

“It may seem superfluous to recite the names of our people; for they were many, and to me unknown. Take this however for certain: There were men and women, young men and old men, virgins and old women, soldiers and vulgar persons, of all sorts and ages. Some, after stripes and fire, were crowned victors.—Some, immediately by the sword, and others after a short but severe torture, became acceptable sacrifices to the Lord. You all heard how I, and Caius, and Faustus, and Peter, and Paul, when we were led bound by the centurion and his soldiers, were seized by certain men of Marcote, and drawn away by violence. I, and Caius, and Peter, were deprived of the other brethren, and were confined in a dreary part of Lybia, distant three days journey from Parvotonium. Afterwards he says, “There hid themselves in the city, some good men who visited the brethren secretly: Among these, Maximus, Dioscorus, Demetrius, and Lucius were ministers. Two others of greater note, Faustinus and Aquila, now wander, I know not where, in Egypt. All the deacons died of diseases, except Faustinus, Eusebius, and Chereimon. God instructed Eusebius and strengthened him, from the beginning, to minister diligently to the confessors in prison, and to bury the bodies of the holy martyrs:—which, however, he could not do without great danger. The president, to this day, ceases not cruelly to kill some instantly; and to tear in pieces others by torments, or to consume them more slowly by bonds and imprisonments: He forbids any persons to come nigh them; and inquires daily whether his orders be obeyed.—Yet our God still refreshes the afflicted with consolation and with the attendance of the brethren.”

This Eusebius,—here honourably mentioned,—was some time after bishop of Leo-

dices in Syria; and Maximus the presbyter was successor to Dionysius in Alexandria. *Plautus* was reserved to the days of Dioclesian—again to suffer,—even to blood.

At *Cæsarea* in Palestine, *Priscus*, *Malcus*, and *Alexander*, were devoured by wild beasts. These persons led an obscure life in the country; but hearing of the multitude of executions, they blamed themselves for their sloth; they came to *Cæsarea*; went to the judge, and obtained the object of their ambition.—Our divine Master, both by precept and example, condemns such forward zeal;—which, however, in these instances we trust, was not without a real love of his name.—We have seen, abundantly, how much like a true disciple of Christ, *Cyprian* of *Carthage* conducted himself in these respects.—In this same city, there likewise suffered a woman, who was said to be inclined to the heresy of *Marcion*; but, probably, there was not much ground for the report.

After three years employed in persecution, *Valerian* was taken prisoner by *Sapor* king of *Persia*, who detained him the rest of his life, and made use of his neck when he mounted his horse; and at length commanded him to be flayed and salted. This event belongs to secular rather than Church-history: But as it is perfectly well attested, and as no one that I know of, except *Mr. Gibbon*, ever affected to disbelieve the fact, it cannot but strike the mind of any one who fears God.—*Valerian* had known and respected the Christians: His persecution must have been a sin against the light; and it is common with divine providence to punish such daring offences in a very exemplary manner.

After *Valerian's* captivity the Church was restored to rest. About the year two hundred and sixty-two, *Gallienus* his son and successor proved a sincere friend to the Christians, though, in other respects, no reputable emperor. By edicts he stopped the persecution; and he had the condescension to give the bishops his letters of license to return to their pastoral charges. One of these letters, as preserved by *Eusebius*, runs thus:—"The emperor *Cæsar—Gallienus* to *Dionysius*,—the bishop of *Alexandria* then in exile,—to *Pinna* and *Demetrius*, with the rest of the bishops. The benefit of our favour we command to be published through the world: and I have, therefore, ordered every one to withdraw from such places as were devoted to religious uses; so that you may make use of the authority of my edict against any molestation; for I have, some time since, granted you my protection:—wherefore *Cyrenius* the governor of the province will observe the rescript which I have sent." He directed also another edict to certain bishops, by which he restored to them the places in which they buried their dead.

Were it needful at this day to refute the rash calumnies of *Tacitus* and of others against the Christians, one might appeal to these two edicts of *Gallienus*. It is impossible that either of them could have taken place, if it had not been undeniable that the Christians, even to the time beyond the middle of the third century, were men of probity and worthy of the protection of government. As it is impossible to avoid this conclusion, the deepest stain rests on the characters of *Trajan*, *Decius*, and *Valerian*, men highly respected in secular history, for treating their subjects of the best characters with savage ferocity.—But God, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, provided for his servants a protector in *Gallienus*, after an unexampled course of heavy persecution during the three last reigns.—*Gallienus* himself seems to have been more like a modern than an ancient sovereign;—a man of taste, indolence, and philosophy;—disposed to cherish every thing that looked like knowledge and liberty of thinking;—by no means so kind and generous in his constant practice as his profession might seem to promise;—the slave of his passions, and led away by every sudden feeling that seized his imagination. The Christians appear to have been considered by him as a sect of new philosophers; and, as he judged it improper to persecute philosophers of any sort, they found a complete toleration under a prince, whose conscience seems to have set him free from the influence of all religion.

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM THE REIGN OF GALLIENUS TO THE END OF THE CENTURY.

THE general history of the Church of Christ, for the remaining forty years of this century, affords no great quantity of materials. After having collected them into this chapter in order, it may be proper to reserve, to a distinct consideration, the lives of some particular persons, and other miscellaneous matters, which belong not to the thread of the narrative.

We now behold a NEW scene:—Christians legally tolerated under a pagan government for forty years!—The example of *Gallienus* was followed by the successive emperors to the end of the century:—It was violated only in one instance;—the effect of which was presently dissipated by the hand of providence.—This new scene did not prove favourable to the growth of grace and holiness. In no period since the Apostles was there ever so great a general decay as in this;—not even in particular instances, can we dis-

cover, during the same interval, much of any very lively Christianity.

Those, however, are not well informed in the nature of the religion of Jesus, who suppose, that, literally, there was no persecution all this time:—True Christians are never without some share of it; nor is it in the power of the best and mildest governments to protect men of godliness from the malice of the world in all cases. We saw an example of this when Commodus was emperor:—Observe another under the government of Gallienus.—At Cæsarea in Palestine, there was a soldier—of bravery,—of noble family,—and of great opulence; who, upon a vacancy, was called to the office of centurion. His name was Marinus.—But, another soldier came before the tribunal, and urged,—that, by the laws, Marinus was incapacitated, because he was a Christian and did not do sacrifice to the emperors;—and that he himself, as next in rank, ought to be preferred.—Achaëus the governor asked Marinus what was his religion;—upon which he confessed himself a Christian. The governor gave him the space of three hours for deliberation.—Immediately Theotecnus, bishop of Cæsarea, called Marinus from the tribunal,—took him by the hand,—led him to the Church,—shewed him the sword that hung by his side and a New Testament which he pulled out of his pocket;—and he then bid him choose which of the two he liked best.—Marinus stretched out his hand; and took up the Holy Scriptures.—“Hold fast then,” said Theotecnus; “Cleave to God: and HIM whom you have chosen, you shall enjoy: you shall be strengthened by HIM, and shall depart in peace.”—After the expiration of the three hours, upon the crier’s summons, he appeared at the bar, manfully confessed the faith of Christ, heard the sentence of condemnation, and was beheaded.

Without more acquaintance with the particular institutes of Roman law on this subject, it is not easy to reconcile this proceeding with the edict of Gallienus.—Perhaps the act of Achaëus was illegal—or, perhaps some particular MILITARY law might be in force against the martyr. The fact, however, rests on the best authority; and the profession of arms appears to have had still among them, since the days of Cornelius, those who loved Jesus Christ.

The greatest luminary in the Church at this time was Dionysius of Alexandria. His works are lost: A few extracts of them preserved by Eusebius have, already, been given;—and some few more may be here introduced.—He speaks of the Sabellian heresy, which had now made its appearance,—as follows,

“As many brethren have sent their books

and disputations in writing to me concerning the impious doctrine lately propagated at Pentapolis in Ptolemais, which contain many blasphemies against the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also much infidelity respecting his only-begotten Son, the FIRST-BEGOTTEN OF EVERY CREATURE, and THE WORD INCARNATE; and, lastly, a deal of senseless ignorance relative to the Holy Ghost;—some of them I have transcribed, and sent the copies to you.”

This is the first account in existence of the origin of Sabellianism;—a plausible corruption, no doubt,—perhaps the most so of all those which oppose the mystery of the Trinity. But, like all the rest, it fails for want of Scripture-evidence, and shews itself to be only a weak attempt to lower and submit to human reason that, which was never meant to be amenable to its tribunal. The careful distinctions of Dionysius, in recounting the persons of the Trinity, were very proper in speaking of a heresy which confounds the persons, and leaves them nothing of those distinct characters, on which the nature of the doctrines of the Gospel so much depends.

This bishop also delivers his sentiments in the controversy concerning the re-baptizing of heretics: He is against that practice; and, at the same time, he condemns with great severity the Novatian schism;—because, says he, “it charges the most loving and merciful God with unmercifulness.”^a Yet, on the subject of baptism, he confesses himself to have been, for some time at least, staggered in opinion by a remarkable case.—“When the brethren were gathered together, and when there was present one who had been, before my time, an ancient minister of the clergy, a certain person, allowed to be sound in the faith,—upon seeing our form and manner of baptism, and hearing the interrogatories and responses, came to me weeping and wailing, falling prostrate at my feet and protesting,—that the baptism which he had received was heretical,—could not be the true baptism,—and, that it had no agreement with that which was in use among us, but, on the contrary, was full of impiety and blasphemy. He owned,—that the distress of his conscience was extreme,—that he durst not presume to lift up his eyes to God, because he had been baptised with profane words and rites. He begged therefore to be re-baptized; with which request I durst not comply; but I told him that frequent communion, many times administered, would suffice. This man had heard thanksgiving sounded in the Church, and had sung to it, “Amen;” he had been present at the Lord’s

^a Euseb. Book 7, Chap. 14.
^b Book 7, Chap. 5.

table; had stretched forth his hand to receive the holy food; had actually communicated; and, indeed of a long time, had been partaker of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,—therefore, I durst not re-baptize him, but bade him be of good cheer and of a sure faith, and boldly approach to the communion of saints.—Notwithstanding all this, the man mourns continually; and his horror keeps him from the Lord's table; and he scarce, with much treathy, can join in the prayers of the Church."

We have no farther account of this matter: but, surely there is good reason to believe that the God of grace, would in due time, relieve such a character.

The detestation of heresy, and the marked distinction of true Christianity were, in some circumstances, carried into an extreme, during this century: discipline, however, was not neglected in the Church; but, as I have already observed, was carried sometimes to excess—even to superstition.—Satan's temptations are ever ready to drive into despair truly penitent and contrite spirits. This story, as it respects all the parties concerned, breathes throughout a spirit the very opposite to the licentious boldness of our own times, and marks the peculiar character of the piety of the age of Dionysius;—which was sincere, but mixt with superstition.^b

The celebration of the feast of Easter and of other holy days forms the subject of another of his epistles.

Dionysius, now returned from exile to Alexandria, found it involved in the horrors of a civil war. On the feast of Easter, as if he was still in banishment, he wrote to his people, who were in another part of the city, with which he could have no personal intercourse. In a letter to Hierax, an Egyptian bishop at some distance, he says, "It is not to be wondered at, that it is difficult for me to converse by epistles with those at a distance, when I find myself here precluded from having any intercourse with my most intimate friends and tenderest connexions.—Even with them I have no intercourse but by writing, though they be citizens of the same Church; and I find it very difficult to procure a safe conveyance of any letters which I would send to them. A man may more easily travel from the east to the west than from Alexandria to Alexandria. The middle road of this city is more impassable than that vast wilderness which the Israelites wandered through in two generations."—He goes on to describe the miseries of war and bloodshed, of plagues and diseases, which, at that time, desolated Alexandria;—and he complains

that the people still repented not of their sins.

To the brethren, he says, "Now every thing is full of lamentation;—every one does nothing but mourn and howl through the city, because of the multitude of corpses and the daily deaths.—Many of our brethren, through their great love and brotherly affection, spared not themselves, but gave one to another, and attended upon the sick most diligently; and, in doing so, they brought the sorrows of others upon themselves; they caught the infection and lost their own lives. In this manner the best of our brethren departed this life;—of whom some were presbyters, and some deacons,—highly revered by the common people." He then goes on to observe with what affectionate care the Christians attended the funerals of their friends, while the pagans, in the same city, through fear of receiving the contagion, deserted and neglected theirs. Undoubtedly he describes here a strong picture of the benevolence of Christians, and of the selfishness of other men.—It belongs to true Christianity to produce such fruits, though, in some respects, they might be carried farther than real Christian prudence would vindicate.—But every lover of Jesus is refreshed to find the certain marks of his Spirit and his presence among his people.

An Egyptian bishop, named Nepos, taught that the Millennium was to commence AFTER the resurrection; and described the happiness of saints as much consisting in corporeal enjoyments. Dionysius thought the notion dangerous;—yet, his candour inclined him to entertain a good opinion of Nepos on the whole. He commends his faith, his diligence, his skill in the Holy Scriptures; and, particularly, his agreeable psalmody, with which many of the brethren were delighted: But, as he thought his opinions not safe, he opposed them. When he was at Arsenoita, he spent three days with the brethren who had been infected with the notions of Nepos, and explained the subject. He speaks with much commendation of the candour and docility of the people, particularly of Coracian their leader, who owned himself brought over to the sentiments of Dionysius.—The authority of Dionysius seems to have quashed the opinions of Nepos in the bud.—The consequence of an injudicious and unscriptural view of the Millennium, thus rejected and refuted by a bishop of candour, judgment, and authority, was,—that the doctrine itself continued, for ages, both much out of sight and out of repute.—The learned reader need not be told, with how much clearer light it has been revived and confirmed in our days.

Dionysius finding how much use had been

^b Euseb. Book 7, Chap. 8.—See Groet.

made of the Revelation of St. John in supporting the doctrine of the Millennium, gives his thoughts on that sublime and wonderful book: With much modesty he confesses, that though he revered its contents, he did not understand their scope.

The subtlety and the restless spirit of those, who corrupt the doctrine of the Trinity, have ever had this advantage,—that while they, without fear or scruple, can say what they please, its defenders are reduced to the necessity either of leaving the field to them entirely, or of exposing themselves to the specious charge of maintaining some human invention, or even heresy,—contrary to that which they are opposing. This last was the case of Dionysius in his attack on Sabellianism. The scantiness of our ideas, and the extreme difficulty of clothing, with proper expressions, those very inadequate ones which we have on a subject so profound, naturally lay us open to such imputation, from which, however, faithful zeal will never be disposed to shrink on a proper occasion;—I mean, the faithful zeal of those who see through the designs of heretics, and who prefer truth, though veiled in unavoidable mystery, to specious error disguised in an affected garb of simplicity.—Sabellius had taken pains to confound the persons of the Father and the Son. Dionysius shewed, by an unequivocal testimony, that the Father was not the same as the Son, nor the Son the same as the Father.—Dionysius, bishop of Rome, being informed of these things, assembled a council, in which certain expressions attributed to his name-sake of Alexandria were disapproved; and he wrote to him with the view of furnishing an opportunity for explanation.

The bishop of Alexandria with great clearness, candour, and moderation, explained himself at large in a work, which he entitled a *Refutation and Apology*.^c In the small remains of this work it appears, that he held the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father: He describes the Trinity in Unity, and steers equally clear of the rock of Sabellianism, which confounds the persons, and that of Arianism, which divides the substance. His testimony, therefore, may be added to that of the primitive fathers all along on this subject.

“The Father,” says he, “cannot be separated from the Son, as he is the Father; for THAT NAME, at the same time, establishes the RELATION. Neither can the Son be separated from the Father; for the word Father implies the union: moreover, the Spirit is united with the Father and the Son, because it cannot exist separate either from HIM who sends it, or from HIM who brings it. Thus we understand the indivisible

Unity without any diminution.” This account was satisfactory to the whole Church; and was allowed to contain the sense of Christians on the doctrine.

In the year two hundred and sixty-four the heresy of Paul of Samosata began to excite the general attention of Christians; and, about the same time, a degeneracy both in principle and practice, hitherto very uncommon within the pale of Christianity, attracted the particular notice of all who wished well to the souls of men. Paul was the bishop of Antioch. It gives one no very high idea of the state of ecclesiastical discipline in that renowned Church, that such a man should ever have been placed at its head:—But it is no new thing for even sincere Christians to be dazzled with the parts and eloquence of corrupt men. The ideas of this man seem to have been perfectly secular. Zenobia of Palmyra, who, at that time, styled herself Queen of the East, and reigned over a large part of the empire which had been torn from the indolent hands of Gallienus, desired his instructions in Christianity.^d It does not appear that her motives had any thing in them beyond philosophical curiosity. The master and the scholar were well suited to each other; and Paul taught her his own conceptions of Jesus Christ,—namely, that HE was, by nature, a common man like others. The irregularities of his life and the heterodoxy of his doctrine could no longer be endured. There is, in fact, more necessary connexion between principle and practice than the world is ready to believe;—for pure practical holiness can only be the effect of Christian truth.—The bishops met at Antioch to consider his case: Among these, were, particularly, Firmilian of Cesarea in Cappadocia, Gregory^e Thaumaturgus, and Athenodorus, who were brethren and bishops in Pontus; and Theoctetes of Cesarea in Palestine. A number of ministers and deacons besides met together on the occasion. In several sessions the case of Paul was argued. Firmilian seems to have presided.—Paul was induced to recant, and gave such appearances of sincerity that Firmilian and the council believed him. The matter slept, therefore, for the present, and Paul continued in his bishopric.

It was in the same year two hundred and sixty-four, the twelfth of Gallienus, that Dionysius of Alexandria died, after having held the See seventeen years. He had been invited to the council; but pleaded in excuse his great age and infirmities: he, however, sent a letter to the council containing his advice, and addressed the Church of Antioch without taking any notice of her bishop. This was the last service of this great and

^c Anth. de Sent.—See Fleury, L. iv, Book 7.

^d Athan. tom. 11, page 857. Fleury, Euseb. vii. Chap. 6, &c.

^e See his Life in Chap. below.

good man to the Church of Christ, after having gone through a variety of hardships, and distinguished himself by his steady piety in the cause of religion. His having been a pupil of Origen in his younger years was no great advantage to his theological knowledge: it is to be regretted that our materials concerning him are so defective; but, the few fragments, which remain, afford the strongest marks of unquestionable good sense and moderation, as well as of genuine piety.

Gallienus having reigned fifteen years, Claudius succeeded; and, after a reign of two years, in which he continued the protector of Christians, Aurelian became emperor. Under him a second council was convened concerning Paul of Samosata. He dissembled egregiously; nevertheless, the intolerable corruption both of his doctrine and of his morals was proved in a satisfactory manner; inasmuch, that the friends of Christ felt themselves called upon to shew openly that all regard to the person and precepts of their divine Master was not lost in the Christian world. Seventy bishops appeared at the synod, among whom Theotecnus of Cæsarea in Palestine was still one of the principal. They waited some time for the arrival of Firmilian of Cappadocia, who had been invited, and was on his way, notwithstanding his great age; but he died at Tarsus in the year two hundred and sixty-nine. He had been one of the greatest luminaries of the day, and so had Gregory Thaumaturgus of Pontus, who also died in the interval between the first and second council. The loss of these great men was, no doubt, the more severely felt on this occasion, because it was not in the power of every one, who really believed and loved the truth as it is in Jesus, to confute and expose, in a proper manner, the artifices of Paul.

Whoever has seen the pains taken at this day, by many persons of Paul's persuasion, to cover their ideas under a cloud of ambiguous expressions, and to represent themselves, when attacked, as meaning the same thing with real Christians, while, at other times, they take all possible pains, and in the most open way, to undermine the very fundamental doctrines of the gospel, will not be surprised that Paul,—artful, eloquent, and deceitful as he was,—should be able to give a specious colour to his ideas. But, there was in the council a presbyter, named Malchion, who added to the soundness of Christian faith great skill in the art of reasoning: He had been a long time governor of the school of humanity at Antioch: and his talents and experience were of great service in this business:—He so pressed the ambiguous, equivocating Paul, that he compelled him to declare himself and to disclose his

most secret meanings. There needed no more to condemn him. All the bishops agreed to his deposition and exclusion from the Christian Church.—Malchion's disputation against Paul was preserved in writing to the time of Eusebius.

No fact in Church-history is more certain than this;—and the inference is, thence, demonstratively clear,—that Socinianism in the year two hundred and sixty-nine, was not suffered to exist within the pale of the Christian Church.—I use that term, because it is now well understood; and because it fairly expresses the ideas of Paul. In truth;—no injury was done to the man: He had certainly no more right to Christian preferment than a traitor has to hold an office of trust under a legal government; and to oblige him to speak out what he really held, was no more than what justice required: Truth and openness are essential to the character of all teachers: He, who is void of them, deserves to be without scholars or hearers. At the same time I cannot but further conclude,—that the doctrine, usually called Trinitarian, was universal in the Church in those times:—Dionysius, Firmilian, Gregory, Theotecnus, seventy bishops, the whole Christian world, were unanimous on this head; and this unanimity may satisfactorily be traced up to the Apostles.

Paul being deposed, and a new bishop being chosen in his room, an epistle was dictated by the council and sent to Dionysius of Rome and to Maximus of Alexandria, and also dispersed through the Roman world, in which they explained their own labours in this matter,—the perverse duplicity of Paul,—and the objections against him.—The chief part of this will deserve to be transcribed,—from Eusebius—as the most authentic account of the whole transaction.*

“ To Dionysius and Maximus, and all our fellow bishops, elders, and deacons throughout the world, and to the whole universal Church,—Helenus, Hymeneus, Theophilus, Theotecnus, &c. with all the other bishops who with us inhabit and preside over the neighbouring cities and provinces;—together with the presbyters and deacons and holy Churches of God,—to the beloved brethren in the Lord, send greeting:—

For the purpose of healing this deadly and poisonous mischief, we have called many bishops from far, as Dionysius of Alexandria, and Firmilian of Cæsarea in Cappadocia,—men blessed in the Lord;—the former of whom, writing hither to Antioch, vouchsafed not so much as once to salute the author of the heresy; for he wrote not specifically to him, but to the whole congregation;—the copy of which we have annexed. Firmilian came twice to Antioch and condemned this novel

* *Athen. de Syn. Euseb. 23, &c.*

doctrine.—He wished to have come, the third time, for the same purpose; but he only reached Tarsus; and, while we were assembling, sending for him, and expecting his coming, he departed this life.—THIS MAN^a was formerly indigent: He derived no property from his parents, nor acquired any either by a trade or a profession; yet he is grown exceedingly rich by sacrilegious practices and by extortions.—He deceived the brethren and imposed on their easiness: He entangled them in law suits: pretended to assist the injured; took bribes on all sides, and thus turned godliness into gain.—Vain and fond of secular dignity, he preferred the name of JUDGE to that of BISHOP: He erected for himself a tribunal and lofty throne, after the manner of civil magistrates, and not like a disciple of Christ.—He was accustomed to walk through the streets, in great state, receiving letters and dictating answers with a numerous guard; insomuch that great scandal has accrued to the faith through his pride and haughtiness. In church-assemblies he used theatrical artifices to amaze, surprise, and procure applause from weak people:—such as striking his thigh with his hand, and stamping with his feet.—Then, if there were any, who did not applaud him, nor shake their handkerchiefs, nor make loud acclamations as is usual in the theatre,—nor leap up and down as his partizans do,—but behaved with decent and reverent attention as becomes the house of God, he reproved—and even reviled such persons.—He openly inveighed against the deceased expositors of Scripture in the most impudent and scornful terms; and magnified himself exactly in the manner of sophists and impostors. He suppressed the psalms made in honour of Jesus Christ, and called them modern compositions;—and he directed others to be sung in the Church in his own commendation,—which very much shocked the hearers:—He also encouraged similar practices, as far as it was in his power, among the neighbouring bishops.—He refused to acknowledge the Son of God to have come down from heaven; and affirmed positively that he was of the EARTH.—These are not our assertions, but shall be proved by the public records of the synod.—Moreover this same man kept women in his house under the pretence of their being poor: His priests and deacons did the same; but he tolerated and concealed this and many other of their crimes, in order that they might remain in a state of dependence; and, that standing in fear on their own account, they might not dare to bring accusations against him for his wicked actions. He also frequently gave them money;—and in that way, he engaged covetous and worldly dispositions very strongly in his interest.—

^a Paul of Samosata.

We are persuaded, brethren, that a bishop and all his clergy are bound to give the people an example of all good works; and we are not ignorant, how many, by the dangerous and evil custom of introducing single and unprotected women into their houses, have fallen into sin;—and how many, also, are subject to suspicion and slander on the same account. If, therefore, it should be admitted, that he hath committed no actual crime, yet the very suspicion arising from such a conduct ought to be guarded against, for fear of giving offence or setting a bad example to any. For how can HE reprove another, or admonish another—not to converse frequently and privately with a woman,—and to take heed, as it is written, lest he fall,—HE, who, though he has sent away one, still keeps two women in his house;—both of them handsome and in the flower of their age: Besides, wherever he goes, he carries them about with him; and at the same time indulges himself in high living and luxuries.—On account of these things all sighed in secret indignation, but trembled at his power, and did not dare to accuse him.

Doubtless he would deserve severe censures, even if he were our dearest friend, and perfectly orthodox in his sentiments;—but as he has renounced Christian mysteries,—We have felt ourselves under the necessity of expelling from the Church this contumacious adversary of God: we have, accordingly, placed in his room DOMNUS—a person adorned with all the gifts required in a bishop: He is the son of DEMETRIAN, of blessed memory—the predecessor of Paul."

It is fashionable, at present, to despise all religious councils whatever: and probably, this contempt does not arise from an EXTRAORDINARY regard to religion itself. For, on all subjects, which are esteemed of moment and of general concern, common sense hath ever dictated to mankind the propriety and advantage of holding councils, by which the wisdom of THE MANY might be collected, concentrated and directed to beneficial purposes. Let the reader reflect, how much this has ever been the case in regard to politics, agriculture, commerce, and the fine arts.—Against religious councils, however moulded, or however conducted, the torrent of the present times, unquestionably, runs violent: And the mind of an historian is strongly tempted to give way to this torrent; for by so doing, he much more easily acquires a reputation for good sense and discernment, than by any exercises of learning, industry, or reflection, if these should lead him to oppose opinions, which happen to be prevalent. But it is, also, to be remembered, that a temporary reputation, which neither consists with truth, nor with the deliberate judgment of the writer

is of very little value;—and with this sentiment in view, I venture to affirm, that religious councils ought not to be universally despised and rejected, because some of them have been useless or hurtful.—The council at Jerusalem¹ was intrinsically of more value than all the wealth and power of the Roman empire: It was by a council, also, that Cyprian was enabled to serve the Church substantially, though in one instance he failed: And, again, the council, which dictated the letter concerning Paul of Samosata, will deserve, under God, the thanks of the Church of Christ to the end of the world. Circumstanced as Paul was,—superior in arduousness, eloquence, and capacity;—supported by civil power and uncontrolled in his own diocese, nothing seemed so likely to weaken his influence and encourage the true disciples of Christ as the concurrent testimony of the Christian world assembled against him. And though it may be difficult for the insincere mildness of polite scepticism to relish the blunt tone of the council, there seems to me, in their proceedings, evident marks of the fear of God, of Christian gravity, and of conscientious regard to truth. No doubt, the reports of Paul's actual lewdness must have been very common in Antioch;—but, for want of specific proof,—the hardest thing in the world to be obtained in such cases,—they check the smallest disposition to exaggerate: they assert no more than what they positively knew; and thus they convince posterity that they were, in no way, under the dominion of intemperate passion or resentment. This is the first instance of a Christian bishop having been proved so shamefully secular;—and that, on the most authentic evidence;—a grievous fact!—The mind is however considerably relieved by observing, that there existed at the same time a becoming zeal for truth and holiness.

Dionysius of Rome died, also, in this year. His successor Felix wrote an epistle to Maximus of Alexandria, in which,—probably on account of Paul's heresy,—he speaks thus:—"We believe that our Saviour Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary: we believe that he himself is the eternal God and the Word, and not a mere man, whom God took into himself, in such a manner, as that the man should be distinct from him: For the Son of God is perfect God; and was also made perfect man, by being incarnate of the Virgin."²

By the favour of Zenobia, Paul for the space of two or three years supported himself in the possession of the mother-church of Antioch, and of the episcopal house, and, of course, of so much of the revenues as depended not on voluntary contributions of

the people. A party he, doubtless, had among the people; but the horror, which Socinianism, then excited through the Christian world, as well as the flagitiousness of his life, render it impossible that he should have had, in general, the hearts of the Christians of Antioch. Zenobia was conquered by the emperor Aurelian, and then a change took place: The Christians complained; and Aurelian, considering Rome and Italy as, in all things, a guide to the rest of the world, ordered,—that the controversy should be decided according to the sentiments of their bishops. Of course Paul was fully and effectually expelled; and we hear no more of him in history.

Aurelian, hitherto, had been the friend of Christians: but pagan superstition and its abettors drove him at length into measures of persecution. The Christians were in full expectation of sanguinary treatment, when his death prevented his designs, in the year two hundred and seventy-five.

Tacitus, the successor of Aurelian, after a short reign, left the empire to Probus; in whose second year, and in the year of our Lord two hundred and seventy-seven, appeared the monstrous heresy of Manes, of which the fundamental principle was the admission of two first causes independent of each other, for the purpose of explaining the origin of evil. But I write not the history of heresies: That has been performed with sufficient accuracy by many, while we have very scanty information of the progress of *TRUS* religion.—This heresy continued long to infest the Church; and necessity will oblige me hereafter, if this work be continued, to take notice of it more distinctly.

After Probus, Carus and his two sons, Dioclesian began to reign in the year two hundred and eighty-four. For the space of eighteen years this emperor was extremely indulgent to the Christians. His wife Prisca and his daughter Valeria were Christians, in some sense, secretly. The eunuchs of his palace and his most important officers were also Christians; and their wives and families openly professed the gospel. Christians held honourable offices in various parts of the empire; innumerable crowds attended Christian worship: the old buildings could no longer receive them; and, in all cities, wide and large edifices were erected.¹

If Christ's kingdom had been of this world; and, if its strength and beauty were to be measured by secular prosperity, we should here fix the era of its greatness. But, on the contrary, the era of its actual declension must be dated in the pacific part of Dioclesian's reign. During this whole

¹ See the Acts of the Apostles.

² Conc. Eph.—See Fleury, Book 8, Chap. 4.

¹ Euseb. Book 8, Chap. 1.

century the work of God, in purity and power, had been tending to decay: The connexion with philosophers was one of the principal causes: Outward peace and secular advantages completed the corruption: Ecclesiastical discipline, which had been too strict, was now relaxed exceedingly: bishops and people were in a state of malice: Endless quarrels were fomented among contending parties; and ambition and covetousness had, in general, gained the ascendancy in the Christian Church. Some there, doubtless, were, who mourned in secret and strove, in vain, to stop the abounding torrent of the evil. The truth of this account seems much confirmed by the extreme dearth of real Christian excellencies after the death of Dionysius. For the space of thirty years, no one seems to have arisen like Cyprian, Firmilian, Gregory, or Dionysius:—No bishop or pastor, eminent for piety, zeal, and labour.—Eusebius, indeed, mentions the names and characters of several bishops; but he extols only their learning and philosophy, or their moral qualities. He speaks with all the ardour of affection concerning a minister in Cæsarea of Palestine, named Pamphilus,—but, in this case also, the best thing, he asserts of him, is “that he suffered much persecution and was martyred at last.”—This event must have happened in the time of the persecution by Dioclesian.—Notwithstanding this decline both of zeal and of principle;—notwithstanding this scarcity of evangelical graces and fruits, still Christian worship was constantly attended to; and the number of nominal converts was increasing;—but the faith of Christ itself appeared now an ordinary business; and here TERMINATED, or nearly so, as far as appears, that great first Effusion of the Spirit of God, which began at the day of Pentecost. Human depravity effected throughout a general decay of godliness; and one generation of men elapsed with very slender proofs of the spiritual presence of Christ with his Church.

The observation of Eusebius, who honestly confesses this declension, is judicious. “The heavy hand of God’s judgments began softly, by little and little, to visit us after his wonted manner: The persecution, which was raised against us, took place first among the Christians who were in military service; but, we were not at all moved with his hand, nor took any pains to return to God: We heaped sin upon sin, judging, like careless Epicureans, that God cared not for our sins, nor would ever visit us on account of them. And our pretended shepherds, laying aside the rule of godliness, practised among themselves contention and division.”—He goes on to observe,—that the “dreadful persecution of Dioclesian was then inflicted on the Church, as a just punishment”

and as the most proper chastisement for their iniquities.”

Toward the end of the century, while Dioclesian was practising the superstitious rites of divination, he became persuaded that the ill success of his attempts to pry into futurity, were owing to the presence of a Christian servant, who had made, on his forehead, the sign of the cross: and, he immediately in great anger, ordered not only those, who were present, but all in his palace to sacrifice to the gods, or, in case of refusal, to be scourged with whips.” He commanded also the officers of his armies to constrain all the soldiers to do the same, or to discharge the disobedient from the service. Eusebius alludes to this in the foregoing passage. Christian truth, however, had not so universally decayed, but that many chose rather to resign their commissions, than to do violence to their consciences.—Very few were put to death on this account.—The story of Marcellus is remarkable.” Mr. Gibbon has undertaken to justify his execution, by representing him as punished purely for desertion and military disobedience. But, it is no unusual thing for this historian to suppress or to disguise facts, when the credit of religion is concerned: and I might have added this instance to the list of his perversions, which I formerly submitted to the judgment of the public.^o The truth is, the death of Marcellus was the effect of a PARTIAL PERSECUTION: New military rules, subversive of Christianity, were introduced: Christian soldiers were ordered to sacrifice to the gods; and they could not do this without renouncing their religion:—Otherwise, it was, in those times, not uncommon for the followers of Jesus to serve in the armies.

It was in the year two hundred and ninety-eight, at Tangier in Mauritania, while every one was employed in feasting and sacrifices, that Marcellus the centurion took off his belt, threw down his vine-branch and his arms, and added, “I will not fight any longer under the banner of your emperor, or serve your gods of wood and stone. If the condition of a soldier be such that he is obliged to sacrifice to gods and emperors, I abandon the vine-branch and the belt, and quit the service.” “We plainly see the cause,” says Fleury, “that forced the Christians to desert:—They were compelled to partake of idolatrous worship.” The centurion was ordered to be beheaded: And Cassianus, the register, whose business it was to take down the sentence, cried out aloud that he was shocked at its injustice. Marcellus smiled for joy, foreseeing that Cassianus would be his fellow-martyr: In fact, he was actually martyred about a month after.

■ Lactantius de morte persecut.
■ Acta sincera, Fleury, Book 8, Chap. 27.
■ See Milner’s Gibbon.

When I read Mr. Gibbon's account of this transaction, I concluded that Marcellus had suffered on principles of modern Quakerism.—Quite unnecessary are any further remarks, on a subject, which is not in the smallest degree obscure or uncertain.

These preliminaries to the persecution, with which the next century opens, did not, it seems, duly affect the minds of Christians in general; nor was the spirit of prayer stirred up among them;—a certain sign of long and obstinate decay in godliness! There must have been, in secret, a lamentable departure from the lively faith of the gospel. Origenism, and the learning and philosophy connected with it, were extremely fashionable: And we conjecture, that the sermons of Christian pastors had more, in general, of a merely moral and philosophical cast, than of anything purely evangelical. In truth,—justification by faith,—heartly conviction of sin,—and the Spirit's influences, are, scarcely, mentioned in all this season. Moral duties, I doubt not, were inculcated, but professors of Christianity continued immoral and scandalous in their lives. The state of the Church of England from the time of Charles II. down to the middle of the last reign,—full of party, faction and animosities and love of the world, yet in its public ministrations, adorned with learning, and abounding in external morality,—seems very much to resemble that of the Christian Church in manners and in piety, from the death of Dionysius to the end of the century.—In one instance there was a great difference: Superstition was much stronger in the ancient Church; but, as it was enlisted in the service of self-righteousness, and as the faith of Christ and the love of God was, in a great measure, buried under it, such a diversity does not affect the general likeness.

God, who had exercised long patience, declared at length in the course of his providence, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my FURY TO REST UPON THEE."

But this scene, which introduces quite a new face on the Church, and was quickly followed by several surprising revolutions, belongs to the next century.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHORT ACCOUNT OF GREGORY THAUMATURGUS, THEOGNOSTUS, AND DIONYSIUS OF ROME.

THESE three persons are all, whom I can find belonging to the third century, to whom,

according to my plan, sufficient justice has not been done already. Of the two last, indeed, I have little to say. Of the first more is recorded. Eusebius¹ has given a short account of him; and his life is written, at length, by Gregory of Nyssen. Cave and Fleury have collected the most material things concerning him; but the former is more to be depended on.—I wish to furnish the reader with every information that may appear valuable concerning this great man: I wish to separate truth from fiction. Considerable allowance, no doubt, must be made for the growth of superstitious credulity:—I dare not, however, reject all that part of Gregory's narrative, in which miraculous powers are ascribed to Thaumaturgus.—His very name² admonishes the historian to be cautious in this matter; and though no great stress, perhaps, ought to be laid on such a circumstance alone, it behoves us to remember that the same idea is supported by the concurrent testimony of antiquity.

He was born at Neocæsarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia. His father, zealous for paganism, took care to educate him in idolatry, and in the learning of the Gentile world.—He died when his son was only fourteen years of age.—The mother of Thaumaturgus took care, however, to complete his education and that of his brother Athenodorus, who was afterwards a Christian bishop, as well as himself.—He travelled to Alexandria to learn the platonic philosophy, where he was equally remarkable for strictness of life and for close attention to his studies. The renowned Origen, at that time, gave lectures in religion and philosophy, at Cæsarea in Palestine. Thaumaturgus, his brother Athenodorus, and Firmilian, a Cappadocian gentleman, with whom he had contracted an intimate friendship, put themselves under his tuition. This same Firmilian is the Cappadocian bishop, whom we have, repeatedly, had occasion to mention. The two brothers continued five years with Origen, and were persuaded by him to study the holy Scriptures; and no doubt is to be made, but that the most assiduous pains were exerted by that zealous teacher to ground them in the belief of Christianity.—On his departure he delivered an eloquent speech in praise of Origen, before a numerous auditory;—a testimony at once of his gratitude and of his powers of rhetoric.

There is still extant a letter written by Origen to Gregory Thaumaturgus,³ in which he exhorts him to apply his knowledge to the promotion of Christianity.—The best thing in it is,—that he advises him to pray fervently and seriously for the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Book 6, Chap. 29.

² Wonderworker.

³ Origen. Philocob. C. 15.

Being now returned to Neocæsarea, he gave himself much to prayer and retirement; and, doubtless, was, in secret, prepared and disciplined for the important work to which he was soon after called. Neocæsarea was a large and populous city,—full of idolatry,—the very seat of Satan; so that Christianity could scarcely gain any entrance into it. Phœdinus, bishop of Amasea, a neighbouring city, was grieved to see its profaneness, and hoping much from the piety and capacity of young Gregory, he took pains to engage him there in the work of the ministry. Gregory, from pure modesty, endeavoured to elude his designs; but was at length prevailed on to accept the charge.

The scene was arduous. He had a Church to found, before he could govern it. There were not above seventeen professors of Christianity in the place. His name-sake of Nyssen seems to have been imposed on by the superstitious spirit, then too prevalent, when he tells us that Gregory Thaumaturgus received, in a vision, a creed from John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary. But, as he assures us, that the original, written with his own hand, was preserved in the Church of Neocæsarea in his time; and,—as this is a matter of fact of which any person might judge;—as the creed itself contains nothing but what is very agreeable to the language of the fathers of the third century;—and, as we have already seen the exact and steady pains with which they guarded the doctrine of the Trinity against heresies,—I do not hesitate to conclude that he either actually composed the creed in question, or received it as his own;—at the same time the intelligent reader, when he has considered its contents, and the consequences deducible from them, need not be in the least surprised at the industry with which, in our times, its credit has been impeached. The whole creed is as follows, and merits our attention the more,—because the orthodoxy of Gregory has been unreasonably suspected, against the express testimony of Eusebius,—who, we have seen above,—represents him as one of the opposers of Paul of Samosata, at the first council.

“There is one God,—The Father of the living Word, of the subsisting wisdom and power, and of us, who is his eternal express Image: The perfect Father of him that is perfect: The Father of the only-begotten Son. There is One Lord, the only Son of the only Father; God of God; the Character and Image of the Godhead; the energetic Word; the comprehensive Wisdom by which all things were made; and the Power that gave Being to all creation: The true Son of the true Father: The Invisible of the Invisible: The Incorruptible of the

Incorruptible: The Immortal of the Immortal: The Eternal of the Eternal. There is one Holy Ghost, having his subsistence of God; who was manifested through the Son to men: The perfect image of the perfect Son: The Life and the source of Life: The Holy Fountain: Sanctity and the Author of Sanctification: By whom is made manifest God the Father, who is above all and in all, and God the Son, who is through all. A perfect Trinity, which, neither in Glory, Eternity or Dominion, is separate or divided.”

Notwithstanding the prejudices, which his idolatrous countrymen must have had against him, he was received by Musonius, a person of consequence in the city; and, in a very little time, his preaching was so successful that he was attended by a numerous congregation. The situation of Gregory, so like that of the primitive Christian preachers, in the midst of idolatry, renders it exceedingly probable that he was, as they were, favoured with miraculous gifts: for these the Lord bestowed in abundance, where the name of Jesus had as yet gained no admission; and, it is certain that miracles had not then ceased in the Church.

Gregory Nyssen himself lived within less than a hundred years after Gregory Thaumaturgus; and both he and his brother,—the famous Basil,—speak of his miracles without the least doubt. Their aged grandmother Macrina who taught them in their youth, had, in her younger years, been a hearer of Gregory. Basil particularly observes, that she told them the very words which she had heard from him; and assures us that the Gentiles, on account of the miracles which he performed, used to call him a second Moses. The existence of his miraculous powers, with reasonable persons, seems then unquestionable. It is only to be regretted that the few particular instances which have come down to us are not the best chosen:—but, that he cured the sick,—healed the diseased,—and expelled devils; and,—that thus God wrought by him for the good of souls, and paved the way for the propagation of the Gospel,—as it is, in itself, very credible, so has it the testimony of men worthy to be believed.

Gregory continued successfully employed at Neocæsarea till the persecution of Decius. Swords and axes, fire, wild beasts, stakes, and engines for distending the limbs, iron chairs made red hot, frames of timber set up straight, in which the bodies of the tortured were racked with nails that tore off the flesh;—these and a variety of other inventions were used.—But the Decian persecution, in general, was before described,—Pontus and Cappadocia seem to have had their full share. Near relatives, in the most unnatural manner, betrayed one another:

* See Lardner's Credibility.

the woods were full of vagabonds: the towns were empty; the public prisons were found too small; and the private houses deprived of their Christian inhabitants, became gaols for the reception of prisoners.

In this terrible situation of things, Gregory considered, that his new converts could scarce be strong enough to stand their ground and be faithful: He, therefore, advised them to flee; and he encouraged them to that step by his example. Many of his people endured much affliction, but God restored them at length to peace: Their bishop returned again, and refreshed and exhilarated their minds with his pastoral labours.

In the reign of Gallienus the Christians suffered extremely from the ravages of barbarous nations, which gave occasion to Gregory's Canonical Epistle, still extant,—in which rules of a wholesome, penitential, and disciplinarian nature are delivered.

The last service which is recorded of him, is the part which he took in the first council concerning Paul of Samosata. He died not long after. A little before his death he made a strict inquiry whether there were any persons in the city and neighbourhood still strangers to Christianity: And being told there were about seventeen in all, he sighed; and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, appealed to God how much it troubled him that any of his fellow-townsmen should still remain unacquainted with salvation: At the same time he expressed great thankfulness—that, whereas at first, he had found only seventeen Christians, he should now only leave that same number of idolaters.—Having prayed for the conversion of infidels and for the edification of the faithful, he peacefully, gave up his soul to the Almighty.

He was an evangelical man,—says Basil, in his whole life: In his devotion he shewed the greatest reverence: YEA and NAY—were the usual measures of his communication:—How desirable is it that those, who profess to love Jesus, should uniformly practise the same! He never allowed himself to call his brother fool: No anger or bitterness proceeded out of his mouth: Slander and calumny, as directly opposite to Christianity, he peculiarly hated and avoided. Lies and falsehood, envy and pride, he abhorred. He was zealous against all corruptions; and Sabellianism, which, long after in Basil's time, reared up his head, was silenced by the remembrance of what he had taught and left among them.—So Basil tells us.

On the whole, the reader will with me regret, that antiquity has left us such scanty memorials of a man so much honoured of God, so eminently holy, and so little inferior, in utility among mankind, to any, with which the Church of Christ was blessed, from the

Apostles' days to his own times. For it is not to be conceived, that so great and almost universal a change in the religious profession of the citizens of Neocæsarea could have taken place without a marvellous exertion of the Holy Spirit in that place. And how instructive and edifying would the narrative be, if we were distinctly informed of its rise and progress! Certainly,—the essentials of the gospel must have been preached in much clearness and purity. In no particular instance was the Divine influence ever more apparent since the apostolic age.

It is not easy to fix with precision, the time when Theognostus of Alexandria lived; though it be certain that he is later than Origen; and, that he must belong to the third century. He platonizes, after the manner of Origen, in some parts of his writings; yet, he is cited by Athanasius as a witness of the Son's consubstantiality with the Father. "For, as the Sun is not diminished," says he, "though it produces rays continually, so likewise the Father is not diminished in begetting the Son, who is his image." It is certain that this is Trinitarian language; and, though neither Theognostus nor Gregory, nor some others of the ancient fathers spake always of the persons of the blessed Trinity, with so much exactness as afterwards was done, it would be an extreme want of candour to rank them with Arians, Sabellians, or the like, when there is the clearest proof that the foundation of their doctrine was really Trinitarian. Before this important article of faith had been contradicted, men did not perceive the necessity of being constantly on their guard respecting it: but when the heresies were formed, they felt themselves, urgently, called upon to express themselves with the most diligent precision. The want of attending to this just distinction has nursed several unreasonable cavils in the minds of those who eagerly catch at every straw to support heretical notions.—Nothing is known of the life of Theognostus.—The proofs of his eloquence and capacity are clear and strong.

The injustice of the late attempts made to invalidate the evidences of the antiquity and of the uninterrupted preservation of the doctrine of the Trinity within the three first centuries, requires me to mention one instance more, which, added to the many already mentioned, will, I think, authorize me to draw this conclusion,—that during the first three hundred years after Christ, though the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity was variously opposed, yet the whole Christian Church constantly united in preserving and maintaining it, even from the Apostles' days, as the proper sphere, within which all

the truth, and holiness, and consolation of genuine Christianity lies; and, one may defy its boldest enemies to produce a single instance of any real progress in Christian piety, made in any place, where this doctrine was excluded.

We have before observed, that Dionysius of Alexandria, through his zeal against the sentiments of Sabellius, became suspected of Arianism; and, that he fully exculpated himself. A Roman synod had been convened on that account; and Dionysius of Rome, in the name of the Synod, wrote a letter, in which he proves, that the Word was not created, but begotten of the Father from all eternity; and distinctly explains the mystery of the Trinity. Such extreme nicety of caution in steering clear of two rocks like those of Sabellianism and Arianism, between which, it must be confessed, the passage is narrow and strait, demonstrates,—that the true doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, which, with so much clearness, as to the existence of the thing itself, though, necessarily, with perfect obscurity as to the MANNER of the existence, discovers itself every where in the Scriptures, was even then understood with precision, and maintained with firmness throughout the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

THE power of real Christianity is always the strongest and the clearest in its beginnings or in its revivals.—Exactly contrary to the process in secular arts and sciences, the improvements of following ages, unless they be favoured with fresh effusions of the Holy Spirit, are, in reality, so many deprivations of what was excellent in its infancy. For these reasons, the object of this chapter would fall exactly within the design of the author of this history; and it would be a great satisfaction to his mind, to be able to explain, AT LARGE, the extension of the gospel in the third century.—But we must be content with such materials as we have, and let the reader supply, from his own meditations, as much as he can, whatever he may think defective in the following scanty account.

In the reign of Decius, and in the midst of his persecution, about the year two hundred and fifty, the gospel, which had hitherto been chiefly confined to the neighbourhood of Lyons and Vienne, was considerably extended in France. Saturninus

was the first bishop of Toulouse, and at the same time several other Churches were founded;—as at Tours, Arles, Narbonne, and Paris. The bishops of Toulouse and Paris afterwards suffered for the faith of Christ; but they left Churches, in all probability, very flourishing in piety.* And France, in general, was blessed with the light of salvation.

Germany was also, in the course of this century, favoured with the same blessing, especially those parts of it which are in the neighbourhood of France. Cologne, Treves, and Metz, particularly, were evangelized.†

Of the British isles little is recorded; and that little is obscure and uncertain: It is rather from the natural course of things and from analogy, than from any positive unexceptionable testimony, that we are induced to conclude that the Divine Light must have penetrated into our country.

During the miserable confusions of this century, some teachers from Asia went to preach the gospel among the Goths who were settled in Thrace. Their holy lives and miraculous powers were much respected by these barbarians; and, many of them, from a state perfectly savage, were brought into the light and comfort of Christianity.‡

The wisdom and goodness of God so ordered events, that the temporal miseries, which afflicted mankind in the reign of Gallienus, were made subservient to the eternal interests of his cruel, blind, and infatuated creatures. The barbarians, who ravaged Asia, carried away with them into captivity, several bishops, who healed diseases, expelled evil spirits in the name of Christ, and preached Christianity.—They were heard, in some places, with respect and attention; and became the instruments of the conversion of numbers.¶ This is all that I can collect of the extension of the gospel among the barbarian ravagers.

CHAPTER XX.

A SHORT VIEW OF THE EXTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THE THIRD CENTURY.

IT is the duty of Christians to shine as lights in the world, in the midst of a CROOKED AND PERVERSE NATION. That this was actually the case, even in the third century,—though much less so than in the two former, and toward the latter end of it with a very rapid diminution of the glorious brightness of the gospel,—the course of the foregoing narrative has, I trust, made apparent.

* Book 1, Greg. Tours France, C. 30, Fleury 13, B. 6.

† See Mosh. 3d Century.

‡ Sozomen, B. 13. 11.

• Ibid. B. 2. C. 5.

• Du Pin, *ibid.*

Those, with whom the real condition of the rest of mankind in those times, is familiar, will see this in the strongest light. For three centuries, luxury, attended by every abominable vice that can be conceived, had been increasing in the Roman empire. There want not lamentable proofs that the severe satires of Juvenal were but too well founded.

ALL FLESH HAD CORRUPTED THEIR WAY. With the loss of civil liberty, even the old Roman virtues of public spirit and magnanimity, though no better, as Augustine says, than splendid sins in their nature,—had vanished. Civil broils and distractions continually prevailed for the greatest part of this period, and increased the quantity of vice and misery. The best time was, doubtless, during the reigns of Trajan, Adrian, and the Antonines: But, even under those princes, the standard of virtue was extremely low. The most scandalous and unnatural vices were practised without remorse. Men of rank either lived atheistically, or were sunk in the deepest superstition. The vulgar were perfectly ignorant: The rich domineered over the poor, and wallowed in immense opulence; while the provinces groaned under their tyranny: Philosophers, with incessant loquacity, amused their scholars with harangues concerning virtue,—but they neither practised it themselves, nor understood its real nature: By far the largest part of mankind,—namely, the slaves and the poor, were in remediless indigence: No methods whatsoever were devised for their convenience or relief: In the mean time, the pleasurable amusements of men,—as the stage and the amphitheatre,—were full of obscenity, savageness, and cruelty.

This was the Roman world. We know much less of the rest of the globe: which, however, in ferocious wickedness and ignorance, was sunk much deeper than the nations that bowed under the yoke of the Cæsars.

Behold!—In the midst of all this chaos, this corruption, and this ignorance, arose out of Judea a light of doctrine and of practice singularly distinct from any thing that was then in existence!—A number of persons,—chiefly of low life,—the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, live as men ought to do,—with a proper contempt of this vain life,—with the sincerest and most steady ambition for another: They prove themselves to be true philosophers, if real love of wisdom be allowed to consist in the justest views and worship of their Maker, and in actual acquaintance with his character,—in real moderation of their passions and desires,—and in unfeigned benevolence to all mankind,—even to their enemies.

No sound rules of philosophizing will direct us to conclude all this to have been of MAN.—The work was of God: and this effusion of his Holy Spirit lasted for three

centuries,—debased indeed toward the end of period, but not entirely extinguished.

It was necessary, that this people,—diverse from all others,—the followers of the same Jesus of Nazareth,—should have among themselves some external order,—or, in other words, some ecclesiastical government.—An endless maze of controversy presents itself here; nor does there appear to be any certain divine rule on this subject. Men may serve God acceptably under very different modes of Church-government; and, in point of fact, these modes were different in different places during the primitive ages of Christianity. This variety, however, does not appear to have been either so great, or so extreme, as to have excluded all general principles in the regulation of the external Church: History enables us to discover,—at least the rude outlines of an USUAL—of a PREVAILING PRACTICE,—which materially differed from most, if not from all the ecclesiastical forms of government, which now exist in the Christian world.

The Apostles, who were the first teachers, and, who planted the first Churches, ordained successors,—as far as appears,—without any consultation of the respective flocks over which they were about to preside. But, as it was neither reasonable nor probable that any set of persons after them should be regarded as their equals, this method of appointing ecclesiastical rulers did not continue;—and, undoubtedly, the election of bishops devolved on the people.^a Their appearance to vote on these occasions, their constraining of persons sometimes to accept the office against their will, and the determination of Pope Leo, long after, against forcing a bishop on a people against their consent, demonstrate this. The characters of men to be elected to this office were very strictly examined. Public notice was given,—that any one might inform against them, if they were vicious and immoral. The decision on their MORAL CONDUCT was left to the people;—that on their DOCTRINE belonged chiefly to the bishops who ordained them. For the power of ordination belonged properly to bishops alone, though presbyters—a second order of men, who appear to me all along distinct from them,—concurred with them and with the body of the people. The same power of electing, was, in some degree and in some instances, exercised by the people in the appointment of these very presbyters; but the case is by no means so uniformly clear; and, in filling up the LOWER offices of the Church the bishop acted still more according to his discretion.

The use of deacons, the third order in the Church, is well known. These three orders obtained very early in the primitive Churches.

^a Bingham, Book 4. Chap. 11. Antiquities, Du Pin, end of third century.

The epistles of Ignatius.—I build on those parts only that are undoubtedly genuine,—demonstrate this: and, in general, the distinction of these offices was admitted through the Christian world.

Yet, if a Christian people were grown very heretical, the bishops thought themselves bound in duty to provide for the instruction of the smaller number, who, in their judgment, loved the truth, as it is in Jesus, by both electing and ordaining a bishop for them. Likewise in sending missionaries to the barbarous nations, it would be absurd to suppose that they waited for the choice of the people. They deputed and ordained whom they approved of for that end.

Besides those, which have been mentioned, there appear, in the third century, a number of lower officers, as door-keepers, sub-deacons, acolyths or attendants, who, by degrees, had grown up in the Christian Church. A much more candid and true account of them may be given, than what has been imposed on us, with sufficient malignity. It could not be to administer to the pride and sloth of the higher clergy, that such offices were instituted. Christians increased in number, and more labourers were required. Besides, as they had not then any seminaries of learning, the serving of the Church in these lower offices was made an introductory step to the higher ones: And this was their most important use.^b

The authority of the bishop was by no means unlimited; but it was very great. Nothing could be done in the Church without his consent. The extent of his diocese was called *metropolis*. Some of these processes had a greater, others a less number of Churches which belonged to them. The diocese of Rome, before the end of the third century, had above forty Churches,—as Optatus observes; and this agrees very well with the account before stated, namely,—that under Cornelius the bishop, there were forty-six priests.^c Cornelius, according to the usual practice in those times, must, himself, have ministered—particularly at the chief or mother-church: and the priests, of course, must have taken care of the other Churches. But, distinct parishes, with presbyters allotted to them, were not yet known in cities.^d It appears that the bishop sent them successively to minister according to his discretion. The neighbouring villages, however, which were annexed to bishoprics, could not be supplied in that manner: And they had,—even then,—several parish priests,—who acted under the authority of the bishop.

That bishops were not merely congrega-

tional pastors, seems evident from the nature of things, as well as from the concurrent testimony of all antiquity. There were seven bishops who belonged to the seven churches of Asia, called Angels in the Book of the Revelations. It is absurd to suppose that the great Church of Ephesus, in the decline of St. John's life, should be only a single congregation; and, most probably, the same is true of all the rest. Supposing the Christian brethren to consist of only five hundred men; these, with their families and servants, and occasional hearers, would make an assembly large enough for any human voice. But, it is more probable that the number of Christians at Ephesus amounted to many thousands. This was the case at Jerusalem.^e And, in Chrysostom's time, the Church of Antioch, consisted of a hundred thousand. Perhaps it might comprise half that number in the latter end of the third century.^f Nevertheless, it is still certain, that dioceses were then much smaller than in after times: and the vast extension of them proved very inconvenient to the cause of godliness. Archbishop Cramer wished to correct this evil in our national Church: and he wanted neither zeal nor judgment.—But that and many other good things slept with the English Reformers.

The choice of bishops and,—in part at least—of presbyters by the people, is a custom which seems to have grown naturally out of the circumstances of the Church at that time. The first bishops and presbyters were appointed by the Apostles themselves; nor could I ever discover the least vestige in Scripture of their appointment by the people. There was not a sufficient judgment in any of them for this trust; the world being, at that time, Pagan, or Jewish, or at least, infant in Christianity. Apostolical wisdom and authority, under God, supplied the want in the next succession of bishops. As the judgment of the people matured, and, especially, as the grace of God was powerful among them, they were rendered better qualified to be the electors of their ecclesiastical governors. Precedents, not Scriptural indeed, but of very high antiquity, were set; and the practice continued during at least the three first centuries. On the other hand I do not find that the people had any power in deposing a bishop: The cognizance of the crimes of bishops was left to a council or synod of neighbouring bishops and presbyters; and in that, as well as all material affairs which concerned the Church in general, the authority of such councils was held very great, from early times; nor does it appear that the Christian laity had any direction in them.—The well authenticated case of Paul of Samosata is very instructive here.

^b Bing. Book 3, Chap. 1. Calv. Institutes, Book the last.

^c See Chap. IX.

^d Bing. Book 3, Chap. 8.

^e Acts xxi. 30. ^f Acts xiv. 23.

In furnishing this rough sketch of primitive ecclesiastical government, I would be understood, neither to provoke nor to invite any controversy on this contentious subject. I have given my own sentiments,—but, at the same time, I confess, that I feel no surprise that controversies should have been started in a matter, where something may be said for episcopacy,—for presbytery, and for independency. To me it seems an unhappy prejudice, to look on any one of the forms as of DIVINE ORIGIN, or of Scriptural authority.—Circumstances will make different modes more proper, in one place, and at one time, than at another.—And, whoever acts in this conclusion, will be in no danger of bigotry,—but, on the contrary, will see such reason for moderation and latitudinarian indifference in judging of various methods, which have been proposed or made use of for the EXTERNAL regulation of the Church.—Let zeal be employed and spent by all sincere Christians in what is really Divine and Scriptural;—in what is INTERNAL, and truly essential to the immortal interests of mankind.—The arguments for the three forms of Church-government, as supported by experience, may be briefly stated thus:—In no one instance does the independent plan appear to have a solid foundation either in Scripture or antiquity; yet, the interference of the people, and the share of authority exercised by them,—though never on the plan of independent congregations,—gives some plausible colour to independence. The presbyterian system seems to be Scriptural and primitive, so far as the institution of the clergy is concerned, but defective for want of a bishop. The episcopal form, no doubt, obtained in all the primitive Churches without exception; but what effectually checks the pride of those who are fond of the pomp of hierarchy,—it must be confessed, that ANCIENT episcopacy had no secular mixtures and appendages: and, further, the pastoral character of bishops, together with the smallness of their dioceses, always adapted to pastoral inspection, made them more similar to the presbyterian hierarchy.—When facts are actually balanced in this way, as nearly as, violent party or prejudice may still lead men to view even historical evidence in opposite lights; nevertheless, men of cool and sedate judgment will not differ much in their opinions.

The discipline of the primitive Church was very strict; it even degenerated, as has been observed, into excessive severity. A clergyman, once deposed for flagitiousness was never restored to his order. This must be right.—Another custom, which prevailed at length, cannot be vindicated. A person once ejected for his vices from the Church might be restored;—on a retrospect, being a

gain ejected, he could never be favoured with Church-communication,—though by no means supposed to be necessarily excluded from the mercy of God in Christ.—Their jealous care against heresies has been abundantly shewn; and their ZEAL against viciousness of practice was equal to this. Suppose, it be allowed that this zeal was carried to too great a length; and, even, that it was mixed with superstition, yet,—in comparison of the licentiousness of our times,—how beautiful does it appear! and how demonstrative of the power and reality of godliness among them!

Christian assemblies were then frequented with great constancy, and the Eucharist was generally administered whenever they met for public worship. But still greater proofs of their superior regard to God and to every thing that is really good, remain yet to be mentioned.

Their liberality to the indigent was wonderful: There was nothing like it at that time in the world. The Jews were a very selfish, hard-hearted people: The Gentiles lived in luxury and splendour, if they could;—but, care for the poor seems to have made no part of their jurisprudence, nor to have been at all a fashionable virtue. I never could learn that philosophers, though they harangued incessantly concerning virtue, either much recommended, or practised any kindness to the bulk of mankind,—that is, the slaves and the vulgar. Indeed their precepts are particularly directed to the higher ranks, and they seem to forget that the lower orders belonged to the human species. An hospital, an alms-house, or any similar provision for the poor, was unknown in the pagan and philosophic world. But, when the religion of JESUS, who is no respecter of persons, began to gain ground, the barbarous spirit of aristocracy lost its dominion among Christians, though it still prevailed in the manners of the rest of mankind. Christians felt themselves ALL sinners: ALL, in the sight of God, on a level.—Bound, indeed, to preserve a due subordination of ranks, and whatever is wholesome in government, the Christian master, however, before God considered his slave, as his equal, and as redeemed by the same atoning blood of his Saviour. The pride of birth, station, and quality, was crushed: The obedient disciple of Christ, followed the example of his compassionate Lord, and made it his business to relieve the miserable.—We have seen above a thousand and fifty widows and impotent persons maintained by the liberality of the Roman Church under Cornelius; we have seen also the active charity of the archdeacon Laurentius, in finding out and assisting miserable objects, punished with a fiery death: The very spirit and taste of Christians, with the frugality and simplicity of their lives and manners, enab-

let them abundantly to help the necessitous; while the rest of the world persecuted them, and while philosophers themselves, dependent on the great, and despising the poor, vainly babbled against them.

"O God of all grace, whose tender mercies are over all thy works,—*THIS* must be thy religion,—which humbled and sweetened the hearts of men, which taught them practically to regard all men as brethren, and to delight in doing good to all, without distinction of persons!"—The pagans themselves admired this brotherly love.

But the most singularly striking characteristic of this people has not yet been noticed.—Though they had a regular polity, guarded by great strictness of discipline, distinguished into a number of communities, each administered by a bishop, presbyters, and deacons; and concentrated by general councils held from time to time; they neither had, nor strove to obtain the least secular support of any kind. They lay exposed to the rage of the whole world around them, incited by its natural enmity against God and by the love of sin; and exasperated on finding itself condemned by these upstarts as deservedly obnoxious to the Divine displeasure. The whole Roman world comprehended thousands of discordant sects and parties,—which all tolerated one another, because all agreed to treat sin with lenity, and to allow one another's religion to be right, on the whole. It was impossible for Christians to do this: Hence the spirit of persecution was excited; and, whoever at this day lives in the same sincere hostility against all sin, and in the exercise of the same charity, patience, and heavenly-mindedness as they did, will undesignedly, yet assuredly, excite, in a similar manner, the displeasure of the rest of mankind.—Now, it is very easy to understand, how precarious, on this account, their situation in society must have been!—They had not the least legal or secular aid against persecution. Obligated, like the rest of the subjects of the Roman empire, to contribute to the general defence, and to serve in the Roman armies, when called on, they had no civil privileges:—If an emperor chose to persecute them, they were perfectly defenceless; they had no political resource against oppression.

What could be the reason of this? Shall we say "their circumstances, during the first three hundred years, were too low, and their means too weak to encourage them to attempt resistance or innovation of any kind?"—This has been said—inconsiderately it should seem—by those who are not willing to allow that their passiveness under injuries proceeded from principle. Let us suppose, therefore, for a moment, that they thought it right to resist *THE POWERS THAT BE*, and that those who resist *DO NOT RECEIVE*

TO THEMSELVES DAMNATION, but merit the tribute of applause for supporting the natural rights of man; then, as no people on earth were ever more unjustly treated, they would naturally feel their injuries as other men do; and admitting them to have been too weak and inconsiderable, in the first century, to have resisted with effect;—surely, in the second, and much more in the third; their thousands and tens of thousands must have been capable of shaking the very foundations of the empire.—So far from being without means, they seem to have had much greater than many who have disturbed the repose of kingdoms.

Here is "*IMPERIUM IN IMPERIO*,"—a regular well-united phalanx of men, inured to frugal habits and to a variety of hardships; not a mere mob of levellers, but men taught to obey their religious governors, and submitting to great strictness of discipline. Among their governors, if history had not informed us so, we are sure there must have been some men of genius, fortitude, and capacity, who already had exercised their talents in the art of government, and who possessed that eloquence which can inflame the passions, especially of the lower sort. Cyprian of Carthage is undoubtedly one of these. The same courage, capacity, discretion, and activity, which made him an oracle over half the Roman empire among the Christians, would,—if it had been exerted in a military line,—have been formidable to the throne of the Cæsars. These brethren in the Roman armies could have taught them military discipline: The riches, which a number of them possessed, might have purchased arms and military stores. Those captive bishops, who gained so strong an ascendancy over the ignorant and barbarous nations, might have easily effected alliances between them and others of the Christian name.

Let the reader mark the inference to be drawn from these considerations.—We pretend not to say, who would have prevailed in the end of such a contest, because nothing is more uncertain than the issue of arms: but supposing the Christians to have thought resistance lawful, we maintain that, amidst the distractions of the Roman empire from within and from without, they had both temptations and probabilities sufficiently strong to have induced them to excite seditions and rebellions against their persecutors and oppressors.—In knowledge and civilization they were not inferior to those among whom they lived: It cannot be denied that they were very unjustly treated; and that they possessed the probable means of redressing themselves by force; and further,—we are now arguing on the supposition that they thought it lawful to use those means,—I affirm then, that which ever way

we turn, we must be presented with the same conclusion,—namely, that, under such circumstances, resistance would infallibly have taken place;—whereas,—on the contrary, it appears—not from a few scattered passages, but from the whole tenor of the writings of the Christians—and, what is still more, from their uniform practice, without any exception, that they thought it UNCHRISTIAN to seek this mode of relief. Patience, and prayer, and charity were their only arms: Nor is it possible to find a single instance of a Christian intermeddling with the politics of his time.

Must we not then conclude—That they understood the rules laid down in the thirteenth chapter to the Romans, and other parts of the New Testament of like import, in their plain, and literal sense?—That they thought it wrong to revenge injuries, public as well as private, and referred themselves wholly to him who hath said, “Vengeance is mine!”—I believe we have no other alternative: This was the sum of Christian politics; and, in this way of understanding the gospel-rules of submission and of suffering,—it is not hard to conceive, what an advantage such a spirit of patience and of abstraction from secular politics proved to them, in making them feel themselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, in causing them to long for the heavenly state, in deadening their affections to the world, and in exercising them in faith and charity: And, whenever real Christians, in our times, shall more fully emancipate themselves from the ambitious notions, with which the present habits and prejudices of men infect them, and, through divine grace, shall catch this same spirit of the primitive believers, they will then see a beauty in the New Testament principles on this subject, of which they have now little idea.—The love of the world will then cease to entangle them so strongly; and primitive apostolic faith and practice will again visit the earth in its genuine simplicity.

The monastic spirit, I have already observed, had begun to appear during the Decian persecution. About the year two hundred and seventy lived Anthony the Egyptian, the first founder of these communities. Athanasius has written his life; and, I doubt not, but many moderns may judge the employment to be a proof of weakness of mind. Posterity will, probably, requite him by being equally rash and uncandid in passing a similar censure on present character.—In truth, Athanasius was a man of solid sense and great capacity; but these endowments are not always a defence against fashionable errors; and unhappily, the Monkish superstition was, in his time, growing up into high admiration.—It is much to be wished, that men adverted more closely to

the “sins which easily boast themselves” in their own days; for then, they would be less quick-sighted in discovering the absurdities of former ages, and also less disposed to form ostentatious and pharisaical comparisons between what they term modern excellencies and ancient defects.—Anthony, it seems, perverting a few texts of Scripture, took upon himself to live in solitude. His austerities were excessive: and the most ridiculous stories are told of his contests with the devil: They merit not the least attention: I observe in them, however, a dangerous spirit of self-righteous pride and vain-glory, by which this same Anthony was encouraged in his progress, and which will lead a man very far in external shews of holiness, while there is little of the reality. It is probable that his life, as it is recorded by Athanasius, might, as superstition grew more and more reputable, appear admirable in the eyes of many persons, who were much better men than this celebrated Monk himself.

We shall, for the present, leave Anthony, propagating the monastic disposition, and extending its influence not only into the next century, but for many ages after, and conclude this view of the state of the third century, with expressing our regret—“that the faith and love of the gospel received, toward the close of it, a dreadful blow from the encouragement of this un-Christian practice.”

CHAPTER XXI

TESTIMONIES TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST FROM ITS ENEMIES.

THE fastidious indifference at least, if not the virulent enmity, shewn to the gospel by the great men of Greece and Rome, during the three first centuries, leaves one little reason to expect much account of Christians though the channel of THEIR writings. Nor is the case materially different in our own days.—A few cursory, sarcastic, and ill-informed reflections are all that, in writers of polite estimation, can be found, concerning more modern revivals and propagation of evangelical truth and godliness. Something, however, of this sort is to be gleaned, which may throw light on the state of religion in the second and third centuries: And, perhaps, Celsus will be more to our purpose than all the other authors together; particularly, if we attend to the extracts from his writings preserved by Origen.—My views in presenting the reader with the following few quotations from heathen authors, is, not merely to establish the gene-

ral credibility of the gospel, but rather, to illustrate the character of real Christians, and to point out some of the effects of the work of the Holy Spirit upon their minds.

In the former part of the second century flourished the Stoic Philosopher Epictetus. Arrian has published his discourses. In one passage he occasionally speaks of "the Galileans, as indifferent to sufferings,—from madness or from habit."

These Galileans are obviously Christians. Through the operation of what cause they were indifferent to sufferings, we shall be willing to learn from those who better understand the subject. Indeed they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, because they were convinced that they had, in heaven, a better and an enduring substance. Christian faith and hope afford motives truly deserving a better name than madness or habit. But the fact is attested by this prejudiced philosopher,—namely, that Christians were then exposed to singular sufferings, and that they bore them with a composure and serenity so astonishing, that philosophers knew not how to account for their patience.—They did not understand, that they were strengthened with might, by the glorious power of their God, to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.

In the same century, Apuleius, a ludicrous author, in his *Metamorphosis*, speaks of a baker, a good sort of man, troubled with a bad wife,—who was possessed of every vice;—perverse,—a drunkard,—lewd,—a follower of vain observances,—and a woman, who pretended that the Deity was ONLY ONE.

I conjecture that Apuleius would have taken no notice of her other crimes, if she had not been guilty of this last. Mark the revolution in sentiment, which Christianity has made in the world. Throughout Europe the character of any man's understanding, would, at present, be much impeached, who should seriously assert a plurality of gods. In the second century, the belief of the Divine Unity is, by a polite author, classed with an assemblage of vices.—What have ye been doing, philosophers, that ye never could rid mankind of that polytheism, which every philosopher now despises? Open the eyes of your understandings, and learn that God has effected this mighty change by the gospel.—This woman was, doubtless, a Christian by profession; but we cannot now tell, whether she merited the reproaches with which her memory is loaded; nor can we say, in what sense her husband, who was plainly a pagan, deserved the appellation of a good sort of man;—but we know that the world, without much scruple, denominates its followers to be good sort of men;—and we also know who said,—“If ye were of the world, the world would love its own.”

The extracts from Celsus,—who wrote in

the latter end of the second century,—preserved in Origen's work against him, are very valuable in the light which I have stated. I shall select a few passages, partly from my own observations, and partly from the collections of others. The reader must be prepared to hear bitter things. A more spiteful calumniator hardly ever existed; but he may serve a purpose which he never intended:—When the following extracts have been seriously considered, the just inferences to be drawn from them, concerning the nature of the gospel, and the characters of its professors, cannot fail to present themselves to the mind of every candid inquirer after truth.

“When they say,—Do not *EXAMINA*, and the like, in their usual manner, surely, it is incumbent on them to teach what these things are which they assert, and whence they are derived.”

“They say,—Wisdom in life is a bad thing, but folly is good.”

“Christ was privately educated, and served for hire in Egypt:” he got acquainted with miraculous arts there; he retained; and, relying on his power of working miracles, declared himself God.”

“The Apostles were infamous men, publicans, and abandoned mariners.”

“Why should ye, when an infant, be carried into Egypt, lest you should be murdered? God should not fear being put to death.”

“Ye say that God was sent to sinners; but why not to those, who were free from sin: What harm is it not to have sinned?”

“Ye encourage sinners, because ye are not able to persuade any really good men; therefore ye open the doors to the most wicked and abandoned.”

“Some of them say, do not *EXAMINA*, but BELIEVE, and thy FAITH shall save thee.”

With a sneer he makes the Christians say,—“These are our institutions: Let not any man of learning come here, nor any wisdom, nor any man of prudence; for these things are reckoned evil by us. But whoever is unlearned, ignorant, and silly, let him come without fear.”—“Thus, they own that they can gain only the foolish, the vulgar, the stupid slaves, women and children.—They, who conversed with him when alive, and heard his voice, and followed him as their master, when they saw him under punishment and dying, were so far from dying with him or for him, or from being induced to despise sufferings, that they denied that they were his disciples:—but now *YE* die with him.”

“He had no reason to fear any mortal man, after he had died, and, as ye say, was a God;—therefore, he should have shown himself to all, and particularly, to him that calumniated him.”

^b The authenticity of St. Matt. 2d chap. which has been unreasonably denied, is supported by this passage.

"He persuaded only twelve abandoned, silly, and publicans, and did not persuade over all these."

"At first, when they were but few, they agreed: But when they became a multitude they were rent again and again; and each will have their own factions; for they had furious spirits from the beginning."

"They are now so split into different sects, that they have only the name left them in common."

"All wise men are excluded from the doctrine of their faith: They call to it only fools and men of a servile spirit."

He frequently upbraids Christians for knowing him, who had a mortal body, to be God; and looking on themselves as pious on that account.

"The preachers of their Divine Word only attempt to persuade fools,—mean and senseless persons,—slaves,—women and children.—What harm can there be in learning, or—in appearing a man of knowledge? What obstacle can this be to the knowledge of God?"

"We see these itinerants shewing readily their tricks to the vulgar, but not approaching the assemblies of wise men; nor daring to show themselves THERE: but where they see boys,—a crowd of slaves,—and ignorant men,—there they thrust in themselves and puff off their doctrine."

"You may see weavers, taylor, and fullers, illiterate and rustic men, in their houses,—but not daring to utter a word before persons of age, experience, and respectability: it is, when they get hold of boys, and of silly women, privately, that they recount their wonderful stories; it is then that they teach their young disciples that they must not mind their fathers or their tutors, but obey THEM: Their fathers and guardians, they tell them, are quite ignorant and in the dark, but themselves alone have the true wisdom. And if the children take this advice, they pronounce them happy; and direct them to leave their fathers and tutors, and to go, with the women and their play-fellows, into the chambers of the females, or into a taylor's or fuller's shop, that they may learn perfection."

"In other mysteries, the cryer used to say, whoever has clean hands, and a good conscience, and a good life, let him come in. But let us hear whom THEY call. "Whoever is a sinner, a fool, an infant, a lost wretch,—the kingdom of God will receive him."—"An untruster man, if he humble himself for his crimes, God will receive him; but a Jew man, who has proceeded in a course of virtue from the beginning, if we look up to him, he will not be received."

He compares a Christian doctor to a quack, who promises to heal the sick, on condition that they keep from intelligent practitioners, lest his ignorance be detected.

"Ye will hear them,—though differing so widely from one another, and abusing one another so foully,—making that boast,—"The world is crucified to me, and I to the world."

"The same things are better said by the Greeks, and without the imperious denunciation of God, or the Son of God."

"If one sort introduce one doctrine, another another, and all join in saying, "Believe, if ye would be saved, or depart;" what are they to do, who desire really to be saved? Are they to determine by the throw of a die? Where are they to turn themselves, or whom to believe?"

"Do ye not see, that any man, that will, may carry you away and crucify you and your demon:—The Son of God gives you no help?"

But enough of Celsus.—He would not deserve a moment's attention, if it were not for the light which he throws on the history of the Christians of his own times,—that is,—of the second century.

It appears evident that there was then a singular sort of persons, subject to all manner of ill treatment from the rest of the world; and who might be hunted down at pleasure by violence or by calumny.—Celsus insults them on account of their defenceless condition. If they had resisted evil with evil, his malignity would have induced him to have reproached them on account of their turbulence and seditiousness. Undoubtedly then, they were a meek, quiet, peaceable, inoffensive people. It appears also,—that they worshipped a person, named Jesus, who had been crucified at Jerusalem, and,—that they worshipped him as God; and Celsus derides their folly in so doing: In his view of things, that the same person should be both God and man, was the greatest inconsistency. Their doctrine concerning Christ appears to him foolish beyond measure; fit only for the understanding of fools, and beneath the regard of wise men. Even from his loose and sarcastic views of it one may conclude, that they laid great stress on FAITH:—and that the exercise of it was considered as connected with salvation; but that this exercise, in its whole nature, was contrary to all that is esteemed wise and great in the world. It was also a great stumbling block to Celsus,—that men the most wicked and abandoned might be saved by faith in Jesus, and,—that men's confidence in moral virtues was a bar to their salvation. Nor does it appear that the number of converts among the learned or the great was considerable:—The lower ranks of men were best disposed to receive it; and the bulk of Christian professors consisted of these.

From these premises, with a careful study of the sacred volume, any man, possessed of

a humble spirit, may see WHAT THE REASON WAS, which Celsus so vehemently reprobates. It could not be the doctrine of common morality. He owns, indeed, they taught this, though he says that the philosophers taught it better. One may appeal to any person almost at this day, whether Christian morals be not immensely superior to any thing that is to be learnt from Plato, Tully, or Seneca. It has been the fashion to extol the moral part of Scripture,—I fear, with an insidious eye to the DOCTRINAL. What this last was in Celsus's days, he himself, in a measure, tells us:—Namely, "Christ crucified, the living and true God, the only Saviour of sinful men;—the necessity of renouncing our own wisdom and righteousness;—salvation through faith alone;—dependence on our supposed goodness, ruinous and fatal."—It is certain, that mere moral truths, if they had formed the main part of the Christian scheme, would not so much have provoked the enmity of Celsus.

In other words,—the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, man's fallen state, justification by Jesus Christ alone, divine illumination and influence, these, which excite the ill-will of man in his natural state now as much as they did then;—THESE were plainly the doctrines which occasioned such misrepresentation and abuse as that, which we have seen.

If the serious reader will take the trouble to examine a variety of controversial writings published against the revival of godliness in our own times, he could not fail to be struck with a remarkable conformity of taste and sentiment between Celsus and many who call themselves Christian pastors. Circumstances vary: The DRESSES of religious profession alter according to the course of things in this world; and hence, the undiscerning will be liable to form a wrong estimate. But, in reality, there is no "NEW thing under the sun."—That, which, in our times, has been derided as ENTHUSIASM, was treated in the manner we have just described, by Celsus and others, in the third century; and he, who pleases, may now see in England the same sort of persons, living by the faith of the SON of GOD, and held in contempt by persons of the same stamp as Celsus.—It has frequently been well observed, that this adversary of Jesus Christ gives a good testimony to the miracles and facts of the gospel;—and I add, with much satisfaction, that he is also, an excellent witness to the work of the Spirit of God in his day, by shewing us what sort of doctrine was preached and professed by Christians at that time.

Lucian of Samosata was a contemporary of Celsus. He has already been mentioned, as throwing considerable light on the history of Christians, in the story of Peregrinus. The delusion into which this hypocritical professor was suffered to fall, after his apos-

tacy, deserves to be noticed as a warning to those, who use the name of Jesus for a cloak to sinister pursuits.

He publicly burnt himself in the sight of all Greece, soon after the Olympic games were over.² He did it to gain himself a name, and "he had his reward."—Heathen authors speak honourably of him. The lustre of his philosophic life and his ostentatious suicide expiated, in the eyes of men of this world, the guilt and infamy of his juvenile profession of the gospel.—A statue was erected to him at Parium in Mysia, which was supposed to be oracular.

The depth of iniquity, in a Christian view, may seem, to misguided and vain philosophers, the perfection of virtue. "THE LORD SEETH NOT AS MAN SEETH."

Lucian tells us also of a person, named Alexander, who deluded mankind by oracular falsehoods. Some Epicureans detected and exposed his fallacies, which made him declare that Pontus was full of Atheists and CHRISTIANS, who had the assurance to raise slanderous stories against him: And he excited the people to drive them away with stones. He instituted mysterious rites, like those of Athens; and, on the first day of the solemnity, proclamation was made,—as at Athens,—to the following effect: "If any Epicurean, CHRISTIAN, or Atheist, be come hither as a spy upon these mysteries, let him depart with all speed.—A happy initiation to those, who believe in God." Then they thrust the people away,—he going before and saying, "Away with the Christians:" then the multitude cried out again, "Away with the Epicureans."

We see here again that there is nothing "NEW under the sun." A fervent or artful supporter of old pagan superstitious finds himself opposed by two sorts of people, the most opposite to one another, which can possibly exist,—Epicurean sceptics or men of no religious principle,—and Christian believers: So at this day,—Christians and Sceptics will unite in discountenancing Papal superstitions;—but with how different a spirit!—The one with compassion and gravity,—the other with carelessness and levity:—and, with how different a design!—The former to establish the true worship of God,—the latter to spread universal infidelity.

The Greek author, Lucian, was himself an Epicurean,—abounding in wit and profaneness. His dialogues are full of sarcastic insinuations against the fashionable idolatry.—He was not aware, that he was co-operating with Christians in subverting the abominations, which had subsisted for so many ages. His writings were, doubtless, of use in this respect: And, who can fore-

see how serviceable, under God, the present fashionable spirit of depreciating and lowering Popery may be to the future general establishment of Christianity,—though nothing be farther from the thoughts or wishes of our present political sceptics and infidels?

There is a dialogue, called *Philopatris*, ascribed to Lucian, but probably written by some other person somewhat later. No doubt, it is of high antiquity. It ridicules the doctrine of the Trinity. "ONE THREE, THREE ONE. The most high God; Son of the Father; the Spirit proceeded from the Father." Such are the expressions in the dialogue. The author speaks also of "a beggarly, sorrowful company of people." He insinuates their disaffection to government;—that they wished for bad news and delighted in public calamities;—and that some of them fasted ten whole days without eating, and spent whole nights in singing hymns.—"Who does not see in all this the misrepresentation of an enemy, describing men of holy lives and mortified affections, who worshipped the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and who, in their desires and temper, were elevated above the world?"

Aristides the Sophist, another contemporary of Celsus, speaks with indignation against certain persons of his day, whom, he observes, in manners to be not unlike the impious people in Palestine; for they acknowledge not the gods: they differ from the Greeks and all good men, are dexterous in subverting houses and disturbing families: they contribute nothing to public festivals, but dwell in corners, and are wonderfully "wise in their own conceits."¹

Thus, when men were out of humour with any persons, they compared them to Christians, who, in this way, were made the "offscouring of all things."—By such evidences as these, however, their singular abstinence from all reigning vices and follies, their steady adherence to the worship of the living God, and the strength of the divine operations on their minds, are proved beyond contradiction.

Much about the same time, Galen, the famous physician, gave testimony to the firmness and perseverance of Christians: "It is easier," says he, "to convince the disciples of Moses and Christ than physicians and philosophers who are addicted to peculiar sects:"—so that their fortitude or obstinacy was PROVERBIAL at that time; and, further,—they were a people then well known in the world.

Plotinus was, in this century, one of the most celebrated disciples of the new Platonic school, the genius of which, as formed

by Ammonius, has been before described. He had studied under Ammonius himself; and, by the strength of his parts, the multiplicity of his literary acquisitions, and the gravity of his manners, he attained a very high reputation in the world. He imitated Socrates in his pretensions to a communion with a demon; and was, by his disciples, looked on as something celestial. Persons of the greatest quality revered him: The emperor Gallienus was, once, on the point of giving him a ruined city in Campania, in which he might settle a Platonic republic.—The man seems, to his dying day, to have supported his philosophic reveries.—When he was actually dying, he said, "I am endeavouring to rejoin that, which is divine in us, to the divine part of the universe."^m Undoubtedly he alluded to the NOTION of "God being the soul of the universe."—that Pantheistic compound of pride and atheistic absurdity, which was the proper creed of most of the ancient Philosophers, and was even more impious than all the fables of vulgar Paganism.ⁿ

The oracle of Apollo, we are told, after his death, informed his admirers that his soul was in the Elysian fields with Plato and Pythagoras.—Such were the artifices by which Satan and his human followers endeavoured to raise up rivals to the Christians. In a work professedly illustrating the operations of the Spirit of God, it seemed proper to take notice of the contrasts, or rather of the counterfeits by which the spirit of falsehood endeavoured to support the declining cause of idolatry.—Its vulgar and gross scenes were, in part, abandoned, and a more refined habit was given to it by philosophy, which pretended to wisdom and virtue in a high degree. But human philosophy could not produce holiness, because humility and the faith of Jesus were not there: Pride was its predominant feature; and while thousands found, even in this life, the salutary benefits of Christianity, vain philosophers prated concerning virtue, but effected nothing either for the honour of God, or the good of mankind.

One of the most studious and laborious disciples of Plotinus was Amelius. It is evident, from a^p passage of Eusebius, that he made attempts to unite something of Christianity with Platonism, just as we have seen Origen,—who was of the same school,—mix something of the latter with the former, to the great prejudice of the gospel. "This was the Word," says he, "by whom, he being himself eternal, were made all things that are;—the same whom the barbarian affirms to have been in the place and dignity of a

^m Fleury.

ⁿ See this point ably discussed in Warburton's *Legation of Moses*.

^p Euseb. Pr. Ev.—See Lardner's Collections, Chap. xxxiii.

principal, and to be with God, and to be God: by whom all things were made, and in whom every thing that was made has its life and being; who, descending into body and putting on flesh, took the form of man; though he even then gave proof of the majesty of his nature; nay, and after his dissolution he was deified again, and is God, the same he was before he descended into body, and flesh, and man."

This may be called no mean testimony to the gospel of St. John,—for he is, doubtless, the barbarian here mentioned:—The ideas of Christianity, it seems, in some loose ambiguous manner, were admitted by these philosophers, and incorporated into their system: and so, in modern times, Swedenburg, Rousseau, or Bolingbroke, have not been unwilling to enoble their compositions with sublime sentiments taken from the sacred writings, but confusedly understood; while yet, they stood aloof from the society of Christians; affected to think them little better than barbarians, and made not, in their own case, the least approach to the faith and love of Jesus.

Thus also Longinus, a scholar of the same school, and well acquainted with Plotinus, in his treatise on the sublime, produces a fine quotation from the first chapter of Genesis, and calls Moses, a man of no mean genius.¹ Likewise, a fragment of this same writer, which has been preserved;—and of which I see no reason to doubt the authenticity,—speaks of Paul of Tarsus, as one of the greatest of orators; and also, as the first supporter of a doctrine by no means proved to be true.

This passage is exactly in the style of Longinus,—rather nervous than elegant.—It is found in a manuscript of the gospels of very good authority;—and no sufficient reason has been given for suspecting its genuineness.—The internal evidence is all against such a suspicion. The supposed author was a most judicious critic,—if ever there was a person in the world, who deserved that character;—and therefore he was very capable, by the excellency of his taste, of seeing and relishing the beauties of St. Paul's compositions: He possessed a very candid temper,—which would dispose him to acknowledge them; and he was perfectly indifferent in regard to religion,—which accounts for his overlooking what ought, principally, to have fixed his attention. For these reasons, I reject the gratuitous and improbable assertion, which has been made,—that this clause concerning St. Paul was forged by some Christian.

We see, hence, how well Christians were known in the third century;—and what respect their doctrine, even then obtained in

the world from those, who, as far as their own personal interests might be affected, were either averse to embrace the gospel, or at least quite careless concerning it.

Porphyry is the last unwilling witness for Christians whom I shall mention within the third century. There is a work, indeed, bearing his name, entitled the *Philosophy of Oracles*, in which there are very strong testimonies in favour of the gospel: but as it appears to have been written in the time of Constantine, or, after the civil establishment of Christianity, the consideration of it properly belongs to the history of the next century.

This man was born at Tyre in Phenicia,—was a scholar of Plotinus, and,—like the rest of that school,—maintained a gravity of manners, and entered vigorously into Platonic refinements.—In acrimony against Christians he far exceeded them all. He took much pains to overturn the gospel; and it must be confessed his learning and acuteness were considerable. The very few fragments extant of his works afford us no great opportunity to judge of the extent of his capacity, or of the depth of his judgment: but, from the serious pains taken by the ancient Christians to confute him, we may conclude that his abilities were of a far higher order than those of Celsus.

In a passage, preserved by Eusebius,¹ he censures the famous Origen for leaving Gentilism and embracing the barbarian tenacity,—that is, the gospel. That he states the fact erroneously, is certain: for Origen was brought up under Christian parents; but I had almost said, that that great man merited such a reproach on account of the extravagant respect, which he paid to the enemies of Christianity.—Porphyry allows him to have been a great proficient in philosophy; and says,—that he was very conversant with Plato, Longinus, and the works of the Pythagoreans and Stoics;—and, that he learnt from these the allegorical method of explaining the Greek mysteries, and, by forced interpretations inconsistent in themselves, and unimitable to those writings, applied it to the Jewish Scriptures.

PASSEY ET AN HOSTE DECERE.—The fanciful mode of Origen in interpreting Scripture is here justly condemned by Porphyry: or, which is the same thing,—the Anapostasian scheme is allowed by him to be unsuitable to those writings. Origen did much mischief by making such attempts: Let the word of God stand simple and alone: and let philosophers be left to their own inventions:—The enmity of Porphyry was not abated by the complaisance of philosophizing Christians; nor did their concessions make any converts to evangelical truth.

¹ On THEOPH. 117.

¹ Euseb. *Eccl. H.* Chap. 18.

His captious reasonings against the book of Daniel shew him to be a bitter, but ineffectual adversary to Christianity: The consideration of these, however, fall not within our design.—The same may be said of various civils which he made to many passages in the Gospel:—We have seen a sufficient specimen of the same spirit in Celsus.

Ingenuity and malevolence, when united, seldom fail in forming plausible objections, wherever opportunities offer. The censure which St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Galatians, has left upon St. Peter, engaged the attention of Porphyry, and induced him, from an occasional difference between the Apostles, to form an argument against the whole of their religion. I have, already, in the former part of this volume, stated my deliberate judgment on this subject;—and, I may here add,—that the very clear testimony which St. Peter, toward the conclusion of his second epistle, gives to the inspired character of St. Paul, at the same time that it demonstrates the harmony of the Apostles, remains one of the fairest monuments of St. Peter's humility and candour.—On examination, then, it appears, that these attacks of enemies, are, in fact, so many evidences of the virtues and graces of the Christians. Surely truth, and wisdom, and goodness may well be presumed to be with those, whom their adversaries assault with such frivolous objections.

On account of an epidemical disorder raging in a certain city, Porphyry observes, "Men wonder now that distempers have seized the city so many years: they forget that Æsculapius and the other gods no longer dwell among them: for, since Jesus was honoured, no one has received any public benefit from the gods."

What a testimony is this to the great progress of Christianity in his day! Malevolence confesses, at the very time that it impudently and absurdly complains.

"Matrons and women," says Porphyry, "compose their senate, and rule in the churches; and the priestly order is disposed of according to their good pleasure."

The falsity of all this is notorious; but the testimony here given, by the mouth of an enemy, to the piety of the female Christians, is perfectly agreeable to the accounts of the New Testament, and to the history of all revivals of godliness in every age;—in none of which women had the government; but, in all a great personal concern by their pious exertions. "There is neither male nor female, but ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

"If Christ be the way of salvation, the truth, and the life; and if they only, who believe in him shall be saved, what became of the men who lived before his coming?"

The reader has often heard similar objections made in our days. The Christians preached then the same doctrine of salvation,—ONLY BY CHRIST,—which is now stigmatized as uncharitable.

"A person asked Apollo how to make his wife relinquish Christianity? It is easier, perhaps," replied the oracle, to write on water, or to fly into the air, than to reclaim her. Leave her, in her folly, to hymn in a faint mournful voice the dead God, who publicly suffered death from judges of singular wisdom."

This story, told by Porphyry, is a memorable testimony of the constancy of Christians.—It also hence appears, that they were accustomed to worship Jesus as God; and, that they were not ashamed of this, notwithstanding the ignominy of his cross. The attestation, however, here given of the wisdom of Calaphas and of Pontius Pilate, will not so readily be admitted.

The enemies of vital godliness, in our days, may see, from the various cavils and misrepresentations contained in these extracts, that their ancient brethren in infidelity have been beforehand with them in all their most material objections. The doctrine, the spirit, and the conduct of real Christians, appears from these evidences: And the work of the Spirit of God on the hearts of men, in attaching them to Jesus, and in divorcing them from all that the world delights in, is no less manifest than the malignity of our depraved nature in hating and opposing it.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONNECTION BETWEEN THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.

I AM sensible that many parts of the foregoing history may appear to several persons defective in point of candour.—"Why such solicitude to prove men Trinitarians in opinion?—Why so strict an eye kept, all along, on the doctrines commonly called Evangelical by enthusiasts and sectaries?—Of what importance are opinions, if men's practice be right?—Why is not all the stress of commendation laid on holiness of life, on integrity, and on charity?"

This language is specious, but is chargeable with the following erroneous notion:—It supposes that there is no real connection between doctrine and practice. Now, a sound Christian cannot admit,—however fashionable the sentiment may be,—that all sorts of religious opinions are equally influential, or equally ineffective in the production of virtuous conduct. The Scripture connects sanctification with belief of

the truth." Our Lord himself prays that his disciples may be "sanctified through the truth:" "The blood of Christ purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God:" And a right faith in Jesus "overcomes the world."—St. John challenges men to prove that they can overcome the world by any other way: and, in the chapter now alluded to, he is very particular in describing what that faith is. In fine, Christ gave himself for us, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."¹—If then this zeal for good works be the EFFECT of HIS redemption,—how is it possible that a person, who disbelieves the important doctrines essentially concerned in that redemption, should have any true zeal for good works. By the supposition, the man never uses, but has an aversion to, the means, which God has expressly appointed and made necessary for the attainment of this end.—Let this concise argument be well considered.

The peculiar doctrines of the gospel are, —Original sin,—Justification by the grace of Jesus Christ,—His Godhead and atonement,—the Divinity and the efficacious influences of the Holy Ghost. We appeal to the Scriptures for the proof of this assertion. If it cannot be proved THENCE, it is not to be proved at all. The tradition of the Church, if it were more uniform than it is, can never sufficiently demonstrate it. But still, an authentic history of the character of the first Christians is very instructive,—and as such, merits our most serious attention. We have found that the doctrines just stated were, in the primitive times, constantly held by men allowed to be the most wise and upright. Surely, so remarkable a fact might well induce those, who, in our times, oppose these doctrines with all their power,—to hesitate a little,—to entertain doubts whether their own sentiments be right; and lastly—no longer to call their adversaries zealots in SPECULATIVE religion.—One would think, that when the Scripture itself affirms the existence of a connexion between faith and practice, and when the history of Christian antiquity exemplifies that connexion, neither the articles of belief themselves ought to be coldly denominated SPECULATIVE, nor the zeal used in supporting them be reproached with the contemptuous name of ENTHUSIASM.—Such reflections as these, it is hoped, may remove from the mind of the reader any unfavourable idea of the historian's disposition in regard to candour.—True candour consists, —not in endeavouring to render an adversary contemptible by using the hard terms, enthusiast, fanatic, bigot, and such like; but in fairly bringing forward and digesting evi-

dence, and in drawing warrantable inferences from it.

Two things have been shewn to have uniformly taken place during the three first centuries;—first, that there existed, all along, a number of persons bearing the Christian name, whose lives proved them to be "the excellent of the earth." And secondly, that, as far as appears, the character of genuine virtue belonged exclusively to men who espoused the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. From the Apostles down to Ignatius, Polycarp, and Irenæus; and, from them, to the age of Origen, both these assertions are demonstrable by the clearest evidence.

Origen alone, of all persons of superior reputation in the Church, has been suspected, as deficient in point of orthodoxy. If the suspicion were swelled into a certain proof, the discredit, which his philosophic mixtures have brought on his character, and the censures, which so many wise and good men have so freely passed on him, as unsound in the faith, would rather prove our assertion of the uniformity of Christian belief in these articles than the contrary. But, that Origen, on the whole, believed these doctrines, is sufficiently proved by express passages of his works:—and his well-known curious and adventurous spirit of inquiry in subjects on which he never meant to be positive, will account for his ambiguities.

I cannot allow Dionysius of Alexandria, merely because he was once suspected to be heretical, to be an exception to my position. His notorious explanation of himself sufficiently confutes the surmise. The age of Cyprian is full of the most luminous proofs. Even the treatise of Novatian on the Trinity is itself a strong argument on the same side of the question. An elaborate, copious and distinct treatise on such a subject written by an innovator,—and the FIRST DISSENTER,—against whom I have freely owned the best men of those times were much too censorious,—would doubtless have been branded with peculiar infamy in the Church, if it had contained any sentiments contrary to the apostolic faith. Its deviation from truth would have been marked with peculiar asperity. But it is universally allowed, that the Novatians held the same doctrines as the general Church, and differed only in point of discipline. What greater proof can be desired than such an uniformity?

Perhaps the case of Paul of Samosata may illustrate the subject still more forcibly.—A bishop was, by the concurrent voice of the whole Christian Church, degraded and expelled, because he opposed these doctrines.—The excellent lives of men of orthodox views are evident in these times of true goodness. I cannot find any proofs of such excellence in other persons who called themselves Christians. I acknowledge the

¹ John xvii. 18.

² Heb. ix. 14.

³ Titus ii. 14.

⁴ 2 Thess. ii. 13.

⁵ 1 John v. 3.

scantiness of historical materials: I make allowance for the prejudices of writers; and, I do not forget, that the compositions of none, but of the orthodox of those times, have come down to us. But, after all, it seems impossible to reject the repeated testimony of such a man as Irenæus, to the wickedness of the heretics.—The immoral character of Paul of Samosata is well known; and men of real holiness and virtue can scarce be entirely hid in any age in which they exist.

We have been told indeed great things of the Ebionites; and they have been set up as the true standard of primitive orthodoxy. But it seems scarcely possible for any man of learning, who has a disposition to examine things fairly and candidly, to lay weight on such a wild and groundless opinion.—Who is this Ebion?—"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"—Let it be admitted that he and his party believed and thought of St. Paul and of Christian doctrines, and of Christ himself, exactly as some persons do, who at this day call themselves RATIONAL Christians.—Will it thence follow that the holy Scriptures will be best interpreted by consulting the opinions of an obscure person, of whom all we know is contained in only a few lines, and whose very existence is but faintly proved; and whose sect also, though it had certainly an early, if any, existence, was condemned in the Christian churches, and even by Origen himself, as heretical?^c

It must be admitted that the Ebionites, in not receiving St. Paul's Epistles, as Origen tells us, acted CONSISTENTLY. THEIR sentiments, and those of St. Paul, are in direct opposition to each other.—But, what are we to think of men who rejected thirteen epistles of the New Testament, of whose divine authority there never was any doubt among real Christians?

And, though the Epistle to the Hebrews has abundant proofs of Divine inspiration, yet, if one were to allow, for a moment, that it was only the work of some pious person of very high antiquity in the Church, and held in very great estimation, who, that soberly examines the balance of evidences, would hesitate to decide that its authority greatly exceeded any possible respect due to the opinions of the Ebionites? Then,—in this regular argumentative composition we find certain doctrines enlarged on very much, and supported by the united voices of the Old and New Testament,—which doctrines, by an obscure sect, of whom we, literally, know next to nothing, are barely denied.—A chain of close reasoning on the one hand;—mere positive assertions on the other!

In judging of historical evidence, no rule can be better founded, than that—the concurrent testimony of the best writers ought always to outweigh the single affirmation of any particular person.—It is on this ground that the relation of Persian affairs by Ctesias is looked on as romantic. The account of the death of Cyrus also, as slain by Tomyris, the Scythian Queen, has no credit, because of the superior credibility of Xenophon, and of other historians. And he would be thought a weak critic in history, who should in our days assert, that

"Charlemagne, with all his peerage, fell by Fontarabia."

Milton, as a poet, may be allowed to say this on the evidence of romances: But sober history, which asserts in general the contrary, must be believed.—On such weak foundations seems to me to stand the authority of the Ebionites in matters of Christian doctrine.

Let not the reader forget, that the object of this whole argument is to establish the indissoluble connexion, which subsists between principle and practice.—For this purpose it may be useful to attend a little to the INTERNAL NATURE of Christian principles.

If there be a favourite point in Scripture, it is the recommendation of humility. The truly humble, with all their imperfections, will be admitted into heaven; the proud, with all the virtue compatible with pride, will be excluded. Those doctrines, therefore, which support humility must be divine: those, which nourish pride must be "earthly, sensual, devilish."^d Now the evangelical doctrines, just mentioned, are all of the former sort. The more they are relished and admired, the more do they direct the mind to honour God, to feel even infinite obligation to him, to entertain the lowest ideas of ourselves, to confound the pride of intellect, of riches, of virtue, of every thing human. To sing salvation to God and the Lamb, to confess our desert of destruction, and to ascribe our deliverance from it to the atoning blood of Jesus,—this is the employment of heaven. The tastes and tempers adapted to such employment must be formed here on earth by GRACE; and the whole work of the Spirit, which we have seen exemplified in three centuries, is to produce and support these dispositions: And, in the words and actions of holy men, we have seen this effect. They believed heartily the truth of doctrines the most humiliating. They were poor in spirit, and patient under the severest treatment and the most cruel injuries, because they were conscious of deserving much worse: they were contented in the

^c See Origen ad Celsum, Book 5, towards the end.

^d James iii. 15.

meanest circumstances, because they felt the beauty of HIS condescension, who though HE was rich became poor for their sakes, and who has provided for them sure and eternal riches. They were serene and confident in God, because they viewed HIM as their Father through the grace of Christ; they were full of charity, because they knew the love of God in Christ: and, in honour they preferred others to themselves, because they were ever conscious of their own depravity:—in fine,—they gladly endured reproach for Christ's sake, because they knew his kingdom was not of this world.

Now take from these men the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and all the motives and springs within them of those actions, which are peculiar Christian, are annihilated.—Mere morals, as taught by sensible heathens, and whatever was by them esteemed reputable in social life, may remain; but that, which is properly of a pious and humble nature, is no more.

For, whoever daily feels himself to be helpless, corrupt, and unworthy; the man, whose hope of divine favour cannot exist for a moment, but under the belief of the most stupendous grace; the man, who is compelled to pray by the voice of constant internal necessity, and who experiences the answer of prayer by repeated supernatural aids, such an one must be habituated to the perpetual exercise of cultivating humbling reflections concerning himself, and GRATEFUL feelings towards his Maker. It is easy to see what a foundation is here laid of meekness, gentleness, modesty, submission to the will of God, and of genuine compassion for the most wicked and most injurious,—the truly humbled Christian always remembering that he himself, by nature, is a child of wrath, as well as others.—Nor is there a virtue among the numerous ones, for which the primitive Christians were so much renowned, but it may be traced up to these principles.

It has been said, indeed,—that the sense of gratitude to God may be as strong in the minds of those who think better of human nature, in its present state, because they must own they are indebted to God for their natural powers and faculties. But the very feelings of the same human nature itself contradict the position. Something like gratitude and humility may be produced, where men are every moment, by experience, made sensible of their dependent condition: not so, where they only admit it in general theory, but are not led, experimentally, to an habitual sense of their real state. Do parents expect to find a more grateful and more humble conduct in their children, by making them completely independent at once, or, by supplying them liberally indeed, but still in such a way as to keep

them continually sensible of their dependence?

The influence of anti-evangelical doctrines on the practice is but too evident.

—Those, who espouse them, if preserved, by providence, in the practice of a decent moral conduct, are, among ourselves at this day, the proudest of men. Even when they attempt to be humble, the power of pride breaks forth and bears down all before it. They feel and discover great self-sufficiency: No subject of religion is too hard for their understandings: and, in all disputable questions, they are sure to decide in that way which most gratifies vain-glory and self-conceit. The teachers of this stamp, however low and limited in capacity and education, are continually exercising the most unbounded, and often the most ridiculous arrogance. They are apt to wonder that the common people have no EARS for them: They do not consider that they themselves have no VOICE for the people. The views of God, of Christ, and of human nature, which they exhibit, suit not the unsophisticated taste of the common people, but rather accord with the pert and vain notions of dabblers in theology and metaphysics. In a word, they contradict experience; and it is not to be wondered at,—that those of their hearers, who have any reasonable modesty, and the least tincture of humility, cannot relish their discourses, because the only food which is adapted to the taste of a miserable sinner is not ministered to them. Deserted by the populace, such ministers as these usually betake themselves to the higher classes: The favour of a few persons of rank compensates to them the want of regard from the multitude; and if they cannot boast of numerous congregations, they console themselves at least with the thought, that theirs are genteel.—Their own account of them is, “that they are both genteel and rational.”

Politics,—the affairs of nations,—the reformation of states; THESE are to them the grand scenes which agitate their passions. To instruct ministers of STATES is their ambition: To bring souls to Christ is left to those, whom they, contemptuously, denominate Enthusiasts. Nor does the least true pathos appear in any of their writings and orations, except in the support of civil liberty,—a subject, most important and most valuable, no doubt; but, with them, ever carried to excess, and, even when treated in its best manner, belonging rather to the province of statesmen and of legislators than to that of divines.—Whoever has attended to the demeanour of these men, cannot fail to have marked them, as evidently haughty, over-bearing, impatient of contradiction; and, of all others, the least fitted, in their tempers, to suffer for the cross of Christ: They

are, however, exceedingly prone,—to represent themselves as actually persecuted;—to enlarge on the iniquity of all restraining or excluding laws in ecclesiastical concerns;—and, lastly, with much arrogance, to boast of their sincerity and soundness in matters of religion,—in an age, when every one knows that there is not the least probability of their being compelled to undergo any fiery trial that might be the test of true Christian zeal, fortitude, and patience.

Are THESE the Christians of the three first centuries?—Or, were those, whom Calvus scorned, such men as THESE?—The facts presented to the reader, forbid the conclusion.—For, if indeed they were men of this class, their worldly and ambitious spirit might easily have found some of the many

pretenders to the Roman empire, with whom they might have united. We should have seen Christians active in politics, bargaining with different competitors for the empire, and insisting on some communication of temporal powers and privileges to themselves. Men, so void of heavenly ambition, would have displayed that which is of the earth; and if Ebion's religious sentiments were then as prevalent as they are now, the humble, meek, charitable, passive Christians would not have adorned the historic page; but, on the contrary, the predominant characters of the foregoing narrative, must have much more resembled the turbulent, aspiring, political sons of Arius and Socinus in our own times.

CENTURY IV.

CHAPTER I

THE PERSECUTION OF DIOCLESIAN.

THE last Century concluded with some symptoms of a storm ready to burst on the Church, which had long been in a state of ease and prosperity, and was at the same time deeply declined from the purity and simplicity of the gospel. Besides the martyrdom of Marcellus in Africa,^a an attempt had been made in a more general, and yet in a covert manner, to corrupt the army. It was put to the option of Christian officers, whether they would sacrifice and enjoy their dignity, or refuse and be deprived. And so much pains were taken in this matter, that many soldiers were desirous of retiring into private life, to avoid the trial. Many however shewed a sincere regard to the kingdom of Christ, and contentedly lost their preferment. Some few were put to death for a terror to the rest. But the general persecution, which afterwards destroyed such numbers, was withheld for some time.^b In this prelude, which has been mentioned above, and of which we have only a dark and imperfect account, something of the political manoeuvres of Dioclesian seems conspicuous. It is evident, that after he had so long favoured the Christians, he had now contracted a prejudice against them, though at first he made use of artifices rather than violence.

This emperor had a partner called Maximian, and they had under them two Caesars, Galerius and Constantius. The last mentioned alone of the four was a person of probity and humanity. The other three were tyrants, though the savageness of Galerius was the most remarkable. He met Dioclesian at Nicomedia, where he usually kept his court, in the winter, in the nineteenth year of his reign, and in the year of our Lord 302, and determined, if possible, to instigate him to measures against the Christians, still more sanguinary and decisive.^c This man had a mother extremely bigotted to paganism, who almost every day employed herself in sacrifices. The Christians about her refused to partake of the idolatrous feasts, and gave themselves up to fasting and prayer. Hence her mind was incensed against the whole body, and she stimulated her son, as superstitious as herself, to seek their destruction. A whole winter Dioclesian and Galerius were engaged in secret counsels. The latter proposed a general persecution; the former remonstrated against the impolicy of such sanguinary measures, and was for limiting the persecution to the officers of the court and the soldiers. Finding himself unable to stem the fury of Galerius, he called a council of a few judges and officers. Some gave it as their opinion, that the Christians should in general be put to death; others induced by fear or flattery assented. Still Dioclesi-

^a See C. XVII. of last Century.
^b Euseb. B. VIII. C. IV.

^c Lactantius de M. P.

an was averse, and through policy or superstition determined to consult the oracle of Apollo at Miletus. Apollo answered in a manner friendly to the views of Galerius, as it might be expected. Staggered with repeated importunities, the old emperor still hesitated, and could not be persuaded to attempt the demolition of Christianity by bloodshed, whereas Galerius was desirous to burn alive those who refused to sacrifice.

The feast of the Terminalia was the day appointed to commence the operations against the church. Early in the morning an officer with guards came to the great church at Nicomedia, and bursting open the doors, sought for the image of God. So says my author, though if this be not a mere flourish of Rhetoric, they must have been strangely ignorant of the sentiments of Christians. The Scriptures which were found were burnt; every thing was given to plunder. While all things were in this confusion, the two Emperors, looking at the scene from the palace, were long in doubt, whether they should order the edifice to be burnt. The prudent opinion of Dioclesian at length prevailed, who feared the effect of a conflagration on the neighbouring buildings. The Prætorian soldiers were therefore sent with axes and other iron tools, who in a few hours levelled the whole building with the ground.

The next day an edict appeared, in which men of the Christian religion, of whatever rank or degree, were deprived of all honour and dignity; were exposed to torture; every one might have justice against them; whilst they were debarred the benefit of the laws in all cases whatever.⁴ Thus was the Christian world at once exposed to all possible insults with impunity. The spirit of man naturally revolts against injustice so flagrant, and a Christian was found hardly enough, under the transports of indignation, to pull down and tear the edict. He was burned alive for his indiscretion, and bore his sufferings with admirable, and it is to be hoped, with Christian patience.

Sometime after a part of the palace was found to be on fire: the Christians were charged with the fact: and the eunuchs of the house were accused. Dioclesian himself was present, and saw his servants burnt in the flames. It is remarkable, that the ser-

vants of Galerius were not put to the torture; while he himself took much pains to keep up the indignation of the old emperor. After fifteen days a second fire broke out, and Galerius left the palace in a hurry, expressing his fear of being burnt alive. Lactantius without hesitation, charges all this to the artifices of Galerius.

Dioclesian now thoroughly in earnest, raged against all sorts of men who bore the Christian name, and obliged among others his wife and daughter to sacrifice. Doubtless he suspected them at least of a secret regard for Christianity. Presbyters and deacons were seized, and condemned in a summary way to death. Eunuchs of the greatest power in the palace were slain, and persons of every age and sex were burnt. It was tedious to destroy men singly; fires were made to burn numbers together, and men with millstones fastened about their necks were thrown into the sea. Judges were every where at work in compelling men to sacrifice. The prisons were full. Unheard of tortures were invented, and to prevent the possibility of Christians obtaining justice, altars were placed in courts, at which plaintiffs were obliged to sacrifice, before their cause could be heard. The other two emperors were directed by letters to proceed in the same violent course. Maximian who governed in Italy, obeyed with savage alacrity. Constantius with reluctance demolished the churches, while he preserved the persons of Christians.

The persecution pervaded the whole Roman world, except France, where the mild Constantius ruled, and from east to west, to use the language of Lactantius, three monsters of horrible ferocity raged.

I am aware, that much pains have been taken to depreciate the accounts of this persecution. If I think it needless to relate distinctly all the sufferings of Christians under it, I must not however be supposed to countenance such attempts. The agreement of Lactantius and Eusebius, both contemporary authors of credit, is apparent. That such edicts were published, that much pain was used to enforce them, that a real attempt was made to extinguish the gospel, more systematical and conducted with more industry and refinement than formerly, these things are certain. Even if we had no particular martyrologies extant, we might be assured from circumstances, that much blood must have been spilt, and much misery endured, not only in a regular and legal way, but also by tumultuary violence, and by the malice of men combined against a set of persons deprived universally of the protection of the laws. There wanted not some instances of humanity and generosity in Pagans towards their Christian friends and relations. But whoever knows, what the passions of

⁴ In a passage, which seems to be misplaced by some mistake, Eusebius observes, that in the 19th year of Dioclesian, edicts were every where suddenly published, by which it was ordered that churches should be levelled with the ground, the sacred books consumed by fire, persons of dignity disgraced, common people made slaves, if they persisted in Christianity. Not long after, says he, other letters were published, by which it was enacted, that all the bishops every where should first be cast into bonds, and afterwards be compelled by every method to sacrifice. These measures of the court increasing gradually in asperity and horror shew, that it was not without reluctance, that Dioclesian was induced to consent to an universal carnage, though he too well agreed with Galerius in forming a system for the extinction of the Christian name.

men are capable of, when set afloat and suffered to act without check or control, will not doubt, that the sufferings of Christians in this period must have been far greater than can be related by any historian. Thus did God at once punish the sins of Christians, revive his work in their hearts by sanctified affliction, evidence the extreme depravity of mankind, and above all, illustrate his own power and wisdom in baffling the rage of Satan,* and in defending and delivering his church, when every thing seemed combined for its destruction. Should any be inclined to pay more regard to the testimonies of heathens than of Christians, let them hear Libanius, the friend of Julian the apostate, who thus speaks in his funeral oration on that Emperor. "They who adhered to a corrupt religion (he means the Christian) were in great terrors, and expected that their eyes would be plucked out, that their heads would be cut off, and that rivers of their blood would flow from the multitude of slaughters. They apprehended their new Master would invent new kinds of torments, in comparison of which, mutilation, sword, fire, drowning, being buried alive, would appear but slight pains. For the preceding emperors had employed against them all these kinds of punishments." He goes on to commend Julian, for using milder methods. Two pillars in Spain were also monuments of the systematic cruelty of this persecution, on one of which was this inscription: "Dioclesian, Jovian, Maximian Hercules, Cæsares Augusti, for having extended the Roman empire in the East and West, and for having extinguished the name of Christians, who brought the Republic to ruin." On the other this, "Dioclesian, &c. for having adopted Galerius in the East, for having every where abolished the superstition of Christ, for having extended the worship of the gods." And to name only one more evidence, the cruelty must have been egregious, which could have induced the persecutors to strike the medal of Dioclesian, which still remains, with this inscription, "The name of Christians being extinguished."

Supported by such authorities against the unreasonableness of modern Scepticism on this subject, we may proceed in the detail of some facts. There were some ministers of the palace, of the highest rank and

nobility, who were yet found to prefer the reproach of Christ to all worldly grandeur. The martyrdom of Peter, one of the Emperor's household, is very remarkable. He was brought before the emperor in Nicomedia, and was scourged with excessive severity. As he refused to sacrifice, though his bones were made bare by the stripes; vinegar and salt were infused into his limbs; this being still to no purpose, he was gradually burnt to death. Dorotheus, Gorgonius, and many others, who served in the palace, after a variety of sufferings were strangled. Anthimus, the bishop of Nicomedia, was beheaded, and with him a great multitude of martyrs suffered. Men and women leaped on the funeral piles with alacrity; the spirit of martyrdom was revived in the church with the persecution. In every place the prisons were filled with bishops and other ministers of the church, and no room was reserved for felons. Martyrs were put to death in every province. Africa and Mauritania, Thebais, and Egypt throughout, abounded with them. Five persons of this last country Eusebius speaks of, whom he had known in Palestine and Phœnicia. He himself saw the scourges and the conflicts with wild beasts, which were stimulated to devour them, and their admirable patience. One of them scarce twenty years of age, stood without bonds, with his hands stretched out in a praying posture, exposed to bears and leopards, which were backward to perform the bloody task assigned them. A bull, which had been stimulated with hot iron applied to him, tossed with his horns and tore his employers, and it was with some difficulty in this scene, that beasts were found to execute the purposes of the persecution.

Egypt suffered extremely. Whole families were put to various kinds of death, some by fire, others by water, others by decollation, after horrible tortures. Some perished by famine, others by crucifixion, and of these, some in the common manner, others were fastened with their heads downward, and preserved alive, that they might die by hunger. But the torments in Thebais exceed all description. Women tied by one foot, were raised up on high, and exposed naked, monuments at once of the inhumanity and indecency of the persecution. Others were torn by the distorted boughs of trees, and these scenes continued some years. Sometimes ten, at other times, thirty, and sixty, and once an hundred men and women with their little ones, in one day, were murdered by various torments.

Our author himself, while in Egypt, saw many executed* in one day, some beheaded, others burnt; so that both the executioners were quite fatigued, and their weapons were

• Let not the reader startle, because I ascribe the permeation of the Church to Satanic influence. The following Scriptures carefully compared together, seem abundant warrant such a sentiment. John viii. 58—44. 1 Tim. ii. 18. 1 Pet. v. 8, 9. 1 John iii. 18. Rev. xxi. 23. 24. To those the evangelist reader may easily add many more. Moreover, as the description of the influence of the Holy Spirit forms an essential part of this history, it seems to fall in with my plan, to bring into view, from time to time, the counterpoise of the said influences, which is undoubtedly the agency of Satan.

¹ Nomen Christianorum delet. See Bullc't's Establishment, &c. EVANG. B. VIII.

• Euseb. B. IX. C. VIII.

blunted. The Christians suffered (he speaks what he saw himself) with the greatest faith and patience. There was even the strongest appearance of joy and triumph among them, and to their last breath they employed themselves in psalms and thanksgiving. One Philoromus was a person of great dignity at Alexandria, a man of wealth and eloquence, who died cheerfully for Christ at this time. Phileas, bishop of the Thmuites, suffered also in Thebais, a man of eminence in his country. In vain did relations, friends, magistrates, even the judge himself, exhort them to pity themselves, their wives and children. They loved Christ above all, and were beheaded.^a

Undoubtedly these scenes demonstrate in the highest manner the strength of grace, and the reality of that divine influence, which attended Christians. And when I see Mr. Gibbon in his notes toward the conclusion of his first volume, quibbling and cavilling against the text of Eusebius, though any reader of Plutarch could have told him, that the Greek word *νεκρωσις*, signifies we saw, and the still plainer word *επιμαρτυρία* leaves no room for doubt, methinks I see Stephen in the glory of his martyrdom, and the Jews gnashing upon him with their teeth.

Phileas, sometime before his own martyrdom, being at Alexandria in prison, wrote an epistle to the Thmuites, his own church, concerning the sufferings of the Christians there. A fragment of which Eusebius has preserved to us, which may not only illustrate the nature of the persecution, but also the spirit and views of the writer and other good men of that time. "The martyrs fixing sincerely the eye of their mind on the supreme God, and cheerfully embracing death for the sake of godliness, held immovably their calling, knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ was made man for us, that he might cut down all sin, and might afford us the necessary preparatives for an entrance into eternal life." (He then quotes the well known passage concerning the proper Deity and humiliation of Christ, in the second chapter to the Philippians). Coveting the best gifts, the martyrs, who carried Christ within, underwent all sorts of tortures once and again. And while the guards insulted them in word and deed, they

^a Philas being asked, How he was persuaded, that Jesus Christ was God, replied, He made the blind to see, and the deaf to hear, cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead. Being asked, Is a crucified person God? he answered, He was crucified for our salvation. The governor said, You are rich, and able to maintain almost all the provinces, I spare you, and advise you to sacrifice. It seems the liberality of Phileas was great toward the poor. The governor added, Thy poor wife looks on thee. Phileas answered, Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all our spirits, he hath called me to the inheritance of his glory, and he may also call her to it. A little before his execution, My dear children, said he, you that seek God, watch over your hearts. My dear children, stick fast to the precepts of Jesus Christ. Acts sincere, Fleury.

were preserved serene and unbroken in spirit, because "perfect love casteth out fear." But what eloquence can do justice to their fortitude? Free leave was given to any to injure them; some beat them with clubs, others with reeds; some scourged them with thongs of leather, others with ropes. Some having their hands behind them, were hung about a wooden engine, and every limb of their bodies was distended by certain machines. The torturers rent their whole bodies with iron nails, which were applied, not only to the sides, as in the case of murderers, but also to their bellies, their legs, and their cheeks; others were suspended by one hand to a portico, and underwent the most severe distension of all their joints; others were bound to pillars, face to face, their feet being raised above ground, that their bonds, being distended by the weight of their bodies, might be the closer drawn together, and this they endured almost a whole day without intermission.—The Governor ordered them to be bound with the greatest severity, and when they breathed their last, to be dragged on the ground. No care, said he, ought to be taken of these Christians; let all treat them, as unworthy of the name of men. Some after they had been scourged, lay in the stocks, both their feet being stretched to the fourth hole; so that they were obliged to lie with their faces upward, unable to stand on account of the wounds caused by the stripes. Some expired under their tortures. Others having been recovered by methods taken to heal them, and being reduced to the alternative of sacrificing or dying, cheerfully preferred the latter. For they knew what was written, "Whosoever sacrificeth to other gods, shall be destroyed," and "Thou shalt have none other gods but me."

Such, says Eusebius, are the words of a martyr, a true lover of wisdom and of God, which before the definitive sentence of his execution, he sent to the brethren of his own church.

One city in Phrygia, being generally Christian, was besieged by armed men, and set on fire. The men with their wives and children were burnt to death, calling upon Christ the God over all.¹ All the inhabitants, magistrates and people, nobles and plebeians, professing Christianity, were ordered to sacrifice, and for refusing suffered in this manner.²

One Adauctus, a Christian, of the highest dignity, who held at that time an office of

¹ Gibbon observes, that there was an important circumstance, which has been noticed by Rufinus, the Latin translator of Eusebius; that the gates were opened to permit them to depart, if they pleased. The remark is worthy of his own malignity. Is it to be supposed, that this permission was unconditional? Eusebius tells us, that it was expected from them, that they should sacrifice.

² Euseb. B. VIII. C. XI.

great importance, was honoured also with the crown of martyrdom. Some were slain by axes, as in Arabia, some by breaking the legs, as in Cappadocia; some suspended by the feet, with the head downward, over a slow fire, were suffocated, as in Mesopotamia; some were mutilated, and cut in pieces, as at Alexandria. Some were burnt to death, in a very gradual manner, at Antioch. Some dispatched themselves, to prevent their falling into the hands of their enemies, by throwing themselves down from the tops of houses; lamentable instances of impatience! But the reader will remember, that the decline had been very great from Christian purity; and that so many should suffer like Christians in so dull a time, can scarce be accounted for, but on the idea of the Lord's reviving his works and ministering the Holy Spirit amidst their afflictions. Nor can I commend the conduct of a lady of Antioch, or that of her two daughters, who to avoid the licentious brutality of the soldiers, drowned themselves. Two other virgins in the same city of Antioch, persons of quality, and of great piety, died in a much more Christian manner, by being thrown into the sea by the persecutors.

In Pontus, sharp reeds were thrust under the nails into the fingers of some; the backs of others were scorched by melted lead, some in their bowels and privy parts suffered inexpressible torments, the judges exercising ingenious malice in the daily invention of new punishments.

Wearied at length with murder, and affecting to praise the clemency of the emperors, who were desirous to save life, they contented themselves with plucking out eyes, and cutting off one of the legs. The number of those who suffered in this way was inexpressible; and they were afterwards condemned to work in the mines.

Lucian, an holy and exemplary presbyter of Antioch, had the honour to apologize for Christianity at Nicomedia, in the presence of the Emperor, and afterwards to suffer. Tyrannio, bishop of Tyre, was thrown into the sea. Zenobius, a presbyter of Sidon, and an excellent physician, expired serene in tortures. Sylvanus, bishop of Emesa, with some others, was exposed to the wild beasts. Pelus and Nilus, Egyptian bishops, with others, were burnt to death. Peter, bishop of Alexandria, suffered also together with Faustus, Dios, and Ammonius, his presbyters. Other Egyptian bishops are mentioned also by Eusebius, who leaves the celebration of the rest to those who saw their sufferings, contenting himself with a more particular account of those whom he knew, and of those facts of which he had ocular demonstration.

As infidel writers have taken pains to depreciate the authenticity of these facts,

it seemed proper to give the reader a just picture of them from Eusebius, and to submit to his determination, whether there be any internal evidences of falsehood in his narrative. In addition to what has been shewn already from Lactantius, and ancient memorials, it may with justice be said in favour of the credibility of our historian, whose character, not as a man, but as a writer, is before us, that he is large and circumstantial in scenes of which he was a spectator, succinct and general, where he had no opportunity of knowing the circumstances. Of the martyrs of Palestine, his own country, he has given us a copious narrative, a specimen of which must now be delivered, containing those whose martyrdom fell within the period of Dioclesian's reign. The rest must be considered hereafter. Procopius was the first of these martyrs, who being brought before the tribunal, and ordered to sacrifice to the gods, declared that he knew only one God, to whom we ought to sacrifice in the manner which he has appointed. Being then ordered to make libations to the four emperors, he repeated a verse of Homer, which by no means pleased the persecutors, as implying a censure of the present government. Upon this he was beheaded immediately. Whether the empire was benefited by the appointment of four emperors instead of one, is a question of politics, which it certainly became not the martyr to enter upon, especially on that occasion. And it is the only instance of deviation into secular matters, which I remember to have seen in primitive Christians as yet. It might be only a sally of imprudent vivacity, but even so it was extremely ill-timed. Galerius, in whose dominions he said this, would probably hear of it; and the fiercest of all the persecutors needed not the addition of such an incentive, to inflame his wrath against the Christians.

After him, in the same city, Caesarea of Palestine, very many bishops of the neighbouring churches, suffered grievous torments: others through fear recanted at the first onset. The rest underwent a variety of punishments. Yet pains were taken to save the reputation of the gods, and to preserve the lives of Christians at the same time.

One was dismissed, as if he had sacrificed, though he was dragged to the altar, and a sacrifice was put into his hand by violence. Another went away in silence, some persons, with an humane falsehood, testifying that he had complied. One was thrown out as dead, after he had been tortured, though yet alive. Another protesting against what was exacted of him, many beating him in the mouth, with a view to com-

¹ Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυμάρτυρον, ὡς παρὰ τὴν ἰστίαν, εἰς βασιλίαν.

pel him to silence, was thrust out of the court. Alpheus and Zacchæus alone of all these bishops of Palestine, suffered death at this time. Tortured for twenty-four hours, after having undergone excessive severities before, they manfully confessed one only God, and one only Saviour Christ, and were at last beheaded.

On the same day, at Antioch, Romanus, a deacon of the church of Cesarea, was martyred. He happening to enter Antioch at the very time, when the churches were demolished, saw many men and women with their little ones, crowding to the temples and sacrifices, most probably Christian apostates.^m The same spirit which moved Mathathias, the father of the Maccabees, on a like occasion, was felt by Romanus, but exerted in a manner more agreeable to the Christian dispensation. He cried aloud, and rebuked their cowardice and perfidy. But being seized immediately, and condemned to the flames, and fastened to the stake, while the executioners expected the definitive order of the emperor then present, (Galerius most probably) he asked cheerfully, Where is the fire for me? Cæsar, provoked at his boldness, ordered his tongue to be cut out. He put out his tongue with great readiness. After this punishment he was thrown into prison, and suffered there a considerable time. His feet were exposed to an unnatural distension, and in the end he was dismissed out of life by strangling. This happened during the first year of the persecution, while it raged only against the governors of the church.

In the second year, when the persecution grew hotter, Imperial letters were sent into Palestine, commanding all men, without exception, to sacrifice. At Gaza, Timotheus, after many sufferings, was consumed by a slow fire; Agapius and Thecla were condemned to the wild beasts. At this time, when many apostatized to save their lives, there wanted not also some instances of an excessive forwardness. Six persons at Cesarea, with their hands bound, ran to Urbanus the Judge, and offered themselves for martyrdom. They suffered, in conjunction with two others, whose spirit and circumstances in the manner of their departure out of life, were more conformable to the rules of the gospel.

Power being now communicated to the governors of the different provinces to punish the Christians freely, each exercised it, as his particular temper dictated. Some for fear of displeasing, did even more than they were ordered. Some felt the impulse of their own enmity against godliness; others indulged a natural savageness of disposition;

there were who saw, that to shed blood profusely, was the high road to premeditation. There were those, (and Lactantiusⁿ looks on them as of the worst sort), who determined to torment, and not to kill. These studied the arts of torture, which might keep life still in being amidst the keenest sensations of pain. Eusebius tells us, that he himself, heard some of this sort boasting, that their administration was not polluted with blood, and that he saw a Bithynian governor exulting, as if he had subdued a nation of Barbarians, because one person, after two years resistance, had yielded to the force of torments. Much pains were taken also with the tortured, to recover them, that they might be strengthened to endure new punishments. A considerable part of Roman jurisprudence was now employed on this subject. The constitutions of the law on this head had been published and commented on by the famous lawyer Ulpian, and were considered as serious objects of study by civilians.

At no time since the beginning of Christianity, was so systematical and so laboured an effort made to extinguish the gospel of Christ. Satan had great wrath, as if he had foreseen that he should have but short time; and when we consider how poorly provided the church was for this the fiercest of all the invasions she had ever met with, we shall see cause to admire the grace of God, who yet furnished out a noble army of martyrs in a time of so great Evangelical declension; and more effectually than ever baffled in the end the designs of Satan.

In addition to other methods of persecution, the powers of genius and the arts of eloquence were introduced. Cyprian alone of the Latin writers was capable of pleasing the taste of, the learned among the Pagans. A certain person of taste among them, was heard by Lactantius, to call him Coprianus,^o because he employed an elegant genius, adapted to better things, in the support of old wives' fables. In so contemptible a light did the gospel appear to the learned of that day, even when clothed in the dress of the eloquent Cyprian! how much more contemptible, in the dress of the generality of Christian teachers, who were destitute of the powers of argument and of language.

Encouraged by the favour of the emperors, and the apparently ruined state of Christendom, at the very time when the persecution raged in Bythinia, two writers appeared, who insulted the Christians. One, whose name Lactantius does not give us, was a philosopher, and like many preachers

^m So a discourse of Eusebius on the resurrection teaches us. See B. on the Martyrs of Palestine, C. II. Valerius in the notes.

ⁿ B. V. C. II.

^o Lactan. B. V. 1, 2. the allusion is to *serpentes* dung.

of morality in all ages, a defender of virtue, and a practitioner of vice. A flatterer of the court, very rich and very corrupt, one who condemned his own practice by his moral writings, and who dealt largely in the praises of the emperors, on account of their great piety in supporting the religion of the gods. Yet all men condemned his meanness in choosing that time particularly to write against Christians, nor did he obtain the favour at court which he expected.

The other writer, Hierocles, was doubtless a man of parts and talents. He was a violent enemy of the gospel, had a great influence in promoting the persecution, and from being a judge in Nicomedia was promoted to the government of Alexandria. He attempted to compare the feigned miracles of Apollonius Tyanæus with those of Jesus Christ. This man wrote with an air of candour and humanity to the Christians, while his actions against them were fierce and bloody.

In France alone, and its neighbourhood, the people of God found some shelter. Yet was the mild Constantius, to save appearances with his superior Maximian, induced to persecute not only by destroying the temples, as was mentioned, but also by ordering those of his own household to quit the service, who would not retract Christianity. The Christians of his family were tried by this means. But the event was contrary to their expectations. Constantius retained the faithful, and dismissed the apostates, judging that those who were unfaithful to their God, would also be so to their prince.

At Ciria in Numidia, Paul, the bishop, ordered a sub-deacon to deliver up the treasures of the church to a Roman officer. The Holy Scriptures and the moveables of this society of Christians were surrendered by the perfidy or cowardice of those who ought to have protected them. But God reserved some, who were endowed with courage and zeal, at the hazard of their lives, to take care of the sacred writings, and baffle the intention of the persecutors, which doubtless was to destroy all records of Christianity among men. Felix of Tibiura, in Africa, being asked to deliver up the Scriptures, answered, I have them, but will not part with them. He was ordered to be beheaded. "I thank thee, O Lord, says this honest martyr, that I have lived fifty-six years, have kept my virginity, have preserved the gospel, and have preached faith and truth. O my Lord Jesus Christ, the God of heaven and earth, I bow my head to be sacrificed to thee, who livest to all eternity." I judge it not amiss to distinguish this man in the narrative. The preservation of civil liberty is valuable, and the names of men who have suffered for it with integrity, are

recorded with honour. But how much below the name of Felix of Tibiura, should these be accounted! He is one of those heroes who has preserved to us the precious Word of God itself. In Abitina, in Africa, forty-nine manfully perished through hunger and ill treatment. In Sicily, Euplius a martyr being asked, "why do you keep the Scriptures, forbidden by the Emperors," answered, "because I am a Christian. Life eternal is in them; he that gives them up, loses life eternal." Let his name be remembered with honour, together with that of Felix. He suffered also in the same cause. Various martyrs suffered in Italy. For Maximian was to the full as much disposed to persecute as Dioclesian.

In the year 305, a civil change took place in the empire, which paved the way for very important changes in the Church, though the persecution continued still for some time. Dioclesian resigned the empire, and Maximian followed his example, though with no great cordiality. They were succeeded by Galerius in the East, (who ruled in the room of Dioclesian, and put Maximian, his nephew, in his own place,) and in the West by Constantius.

Maximian inherited the savageness and the prejudices of his uncle; and in Palestine and in the more eastern parts, over which Galerius had ruled, he still continued the horrors of the persecution. Let us now attend to the remaining part of Eusebius's account of the martyrs of Palestine, who suffered under the authority of this tyrant at different times.

Apphian, a young person under twenty, who had received a very polite education at Berytus, and could not bear to live with his father and relations at Paga in Lycia, because of their aversion to the gospel, left all his secular emoluments and hopes for the love of Christ, and came to Cæsarea; where he was so transported with zeal as to run up to Urbanus the governor, then making a libation, to seize him by the right hand, to stop his religious employment, and exhort him to forsake idolatry, and turn to the true God. The consequence was, what might be expected in the natural course of things. He was arrested, ordered to sacrifice, and, after he had sustained most dreadful tortures by fire and otherwise, which Eusebius describes with an exactness of detail that need not be repeated, he was thrown into the sea. His imprudence was great, and his zeal very irregular and extravagant; but who will not admire the sincerity of that love of Christ, which carried this lively youth through all hardships, and prefer his disposition, with all his faults, to the cowardice and love of the world, which in our times prevents such

numbers from daring to shew due regard for the divine Saviour?

This Apphian had a brother called *Ædesius*, who had advanced farther in the philosophical studies than himself, and who likewise embraced the faith of Christ. Prisons, bonds, and the drudgery of the mines of Palestine, he endured with great patience and fortitude; at length he came to Alexandria, and there saw the judge raging with frantic fury against Christians, treating the men with various abuses, and giving up chaste virgins, who had devoted themselves to a single life, to pimps, to be treated in the vilest manner. Fired at the sight, he lost all patience, rebuked the magistrate, and struck him. Upon which he was exposed to a variety of torture, and thrown into the sea. He seems to have possessed both the excellencies and the faults of his brother. It is proper to add, that this inhuman magistrate was no other than the philosophical Hierocles, whose affected humanity and candour we have celebrated above. A remark or two may be proper in this place, before we proceed.

1. The persecution we are reviewing found the church in the lowest state of Christian wisdom and piety. In addition to what I have said on the ungenerous remarks of Mr. Gibbon, concerning the behaviour of *Ædesius*, it should be observed, that amidst the great dearth of instruction, in which he had learned Christianity, it is not to be wondered at, that he should know his duty so poorly. I compared the piety of him and of Apphian to that of Jephtha and of Samson; sincere, but irregular and injudicious. They lived under similar circumstances, in times of ignorance. The Spirit of God, when he creates a new heart, and a new spirit, and furnishes the man with dispositions for obedience, supersedes not the use of pastoral instruction. Where this is much wanted, even divine love itself, though strong, is blind, comparatively speaking, and will mistake the rule of duty continually. It is in vain, that I look out for judicious and discreet pastors, and for clear evangelical views in all this period. No Cyprian or Dionysius now appeared, to check, to regulate, to controul the spirits of Christians, and to discipline them by Scripture-rules. The persecution found vast numbers perfidious and cowardly; some chosen spirits, humble and faithful to death, but of these many, it is to be feared, poorly informed of their duty both to God and man, and mixing with the love of Christ the intemperance and precipitation of blind self-will. The best use to be made of this observation, after teaching us to be candid to the faults of these good men, is this, that those who enjoy the advantage of better instruction and wise pastors, should thankfully

improve their privileges, and not by the want of just subordination deprive themselves of the opportunity of exhibiting more regular and edifying examples of holiness. That knowledge was thus low among Christians, is evident from this, that Eusebius, one of the most learned of those times, extols a conduct in these brethren, which every Christian of common light and capacity now would condemn.

2. I see also the prevalence both of the monastic and of the philosophic spirit. Devotees were increasing in numbers among serious persons; and Origenism had made philosophy more and more reputable. Under this influence the two brothers, whose story we have seen, imbibed too much of Platonism, knew too little of Christianity, and though sincere enough to become martyrs for Christ, attained not the praise of Christian simplicity. The doctrines of Christ had ceased to be explicitly unfolded; and it was in sufferings chiefly, endured with patient faith and cheerful hope, that we can now see, that Christ had yet a church in the world. The bush was burning indeed in a fire the most dreadful, yet it was not consumed.

In the fourth year of the persecution happened the martyrdom of Agapius at *Comana*. Maximian Caesar was there exhibiting spectacles in honour of his birth-day. The ferociousness of pagans was doubtless much augmented by the usual barbarous sports; and the native enmity of the mind against godliness met not with so many checks of humanity, in times of persecution, as it would in our days of civilisation. But it should be remembered, that it was not philosophy, but the gospel, which improved, in this as well as other respects, the morality of the Roman empire. Agapius, who had been thrice before brought on the stage, and had thrice been respited by the compassion of the judge, was now brought before the emperor, to fulfill, says Eusebius, that word of Christ, "ye shall be brought before kings for my name's sake." A slave who had murdered his master was produced at the same time, and condemned to the wild beasts. The emperor, with a view to distinguish his birth-day by an act of generosity, both pardoned and gave freedom to the murderer. The whole amphitheatre rang with acclamations in praise of his clemency. But it was perfectly to act in character, for Maximian to punish the innocent, and to spare the guilty. He asked Agapius, if he would renounce Christianity, promising him liberty on that condition. The martyr expressed his cheerful readiness to undergo any punishment, not for any crime committed by him, but for piety toward the Lord of the universe. He was condemned to be torn by a bear, and still breathing, was carried back to prison; where, after he had lived a day, with weights hung to his

* See Valesius' notes on Euseb.
Remarks on Gibbon.

fect, he was sunk in the sea. The exclamation of the Jews, in the history of our Saviour, "not this man but Barabbas," naturally occurs to Eusebius on this occasion.

In the fifth year of the persecution, a Tyrian virgin, Theodosia, not quite eighteen years old, was put to death for owning and countenancing some Christian prisoners. The judge, Urbanus, afterwards condemned them to the mines of Palestine. Silvanus a presbyter, afterwards a bishop, with some others, was doomed to the labour of the ~~harm~~ mines, the joints of their feet being first weakened by the application of hot iron.

Few persecutors exceeded Urbanus in malice and activity. He doomed three to fight with one another; Auxentius, a venerable old saint, he condemned to the beasts. Some of them he condemned to the mines after he had made them eunuchs. Others, after bitter torments, he threw into prison again.

If any be still inclined to regard the calculation of those, who represent the number of the martyrs as small, let him consider, that it was evidently very much the policy of this, and most probably of the former persecutions, to torment Christians without destroying them. The emperors did not wish to rob themselves of such a number of subjects, but to subdue them to their will. Yet in many instances the human frame must have sunk under these hardships; and the multitude of Christian sufferers on this account, in addition to the evils of poverty and flight, must exceed all powers of calculation.

Urbanus tortured, among others, the famous Pamphilus, the friend of Eusebius. But he lived not to see his martyrdom. Being himself convicted of crimes, Urbanus was capitally punished in Caesarea, the scene of his cruelties, and by the same Maximin, of whose imperial savageness he had been the minister.

In the sixth year of the persecution, of the great multitude of Christian sufferers in Thebais near a hundred were selected to be sent to Palestine, and were adjudged by Firmilian, the successor of Urbanus, to be lamed in the left foot, and to lose the right eye, and in that state to be condemned to the mines. The three persons also, who had been condemned to fight with one another, for refusing to learn the new business of a gladiator imposed on them, were doomed by Maximin himself with some others, to the same punishments as the persons transported from Thebais. Some persons were apprehended at Gaza for meeting together to hear the Scripture read, and were punished with the loss of a limb, and an eye, or in a still more cruel manner. Two women after sustaining horrible torments, were put to death. The former being menaced with the loss of chastity, burst out into expressions of indignation a-

gainst the tyrant Maximin, for employing such judges. The latter being dragged by force, to an altar, threw it down. What was said before of *Ædesius* and *Apphian* may be applied to these. But there were Christians of a higher class better informed in their duty, and more possessed of the mind of Christ. One Paul, being sentenced to lose his head, begged a short space of time to be allowed him. His request being granted, he prayed with a loud voice for the whole Christian world, that God would forgive them, remove the present heavy scourge of their iniquities, and restore them to peace and liberty: he then prayed for the Jews, that they might come to God and find access to him through Christ. In the next place, he prayed that the same blessings might be vouchsafed to the Samaritans. The Gentiles, who lived in error and the ignorance of God, were the next objects of his charitable petitions, that they might be brought to know God and to serve him: nor did he omit to mention the crowd about him, the judge who had sentenced him, the emperors, and the executioner, and in the hearing of all he prayed, that their sin might not be laid to their charge. The whole company was moved, and tears were shed. The martyr composed himself to suffer, and offering his neck to the sword, he was beheaded. An admirable Christian hero! in whom divine love breathed in conjunction with resignation and serenity. The Lord's hand was not shortened: His grace appeared in him in a manner worthy of the Apostolic age. Soon after an hundred and thirty Egyptian chieftains, suffering the same mutilations which have been mentioned above, were sentenced by Maximin to the mines of Palestine and Cilicia.

After the persecution had paused sometime, it was renewed with fresh violence by the edicts of Maximin. The temples were repaired, men were compelled to sacrifice every where, all things sold in the markets were polluted with libations, and persons were placed at the public baths to force men to idolatrous compliances. Three believers, Antoninus, Zebinus, and Germanus, threw themselves into the hands of Firmilian, and were capitally punished. Eusebius in his usual manner commends their over-forward zeal: with them a virgin called *Ennathas* was dragged by violence to the judge, whipped, and burned to death. Their bodies were left exposed to the beasts of prey, and particular care was taken to prevent their interment. Sometime after, certain Egyptians, coming to minister to the confessors of their own country, who had been condemned to the mines in Cilicia, one of them was burned, two were beheaded, and several were associated with the con-

cessors in their afflictions, mutilation, and the drudgery of the mines. Peter the monk, having in vain been solicited by the judge to save his life, gave it up cheerfully for the sake of Christ. With him suffered Asclepius bishop of the Marcionites, being burned on the same funeral pile, "animated with zeal, says my Author, but not according to knowledge." This however might be more than Eusebius knew. The heretical form, in which he appeared, might be consistent with the pure love of Christ, nor in a history, which undertakes impartially to celebrate the people of God, does it become us to be blinded by the idea of a rigorous and exclusive uniformity of denomination.

Pamphilus the presbyter and friend of Eusebius is commended by him abundantly for his contempt of secular grandeur, to which he might have aspired, for his great liberality to the poor, for that which may seem more likely to cloud than to adorn his Christian excellencies, his philosophic life, and above all, for his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, in which his panegyrist thinks he excelled all men of that time, and for his benevolence to all who came to him. An excellent Christian he undoubtedly was, though a moderate degree of Evangelical knowledge in that age, would easily be esteemed prodigious. Firmilian asking him when brought before him, what was his country, received for answer, "Jerusalem." Not understanding what he meant by this, he tortured him for an explanation. Pamphilus persisted, that he had spoken truth. "Where is this country of yours." "It belongs to those alone, who worship the true God." The judge, at once incensed and perplexed, after various torments, ordered him to be beheaded. Twelve martyrs suffered with him. One of them Porphyrius, a servant of Pamphilus, begging the favour of interment for the deceased, was ordered to be burned; and was heard for the last time, when the flame began to reach him, to call upon Jesus the Son of God as his helper. It is remarkable, that Firmilian also himself, after having trodden in the steps of Urbanus in shedding Christian blood, like him also suffered capitally by the sentence of the emperor.

Toward the end of the seventh year the persecution relaxing in some degree, the multitude of the confessors in the mines of Palestine enjoyed some liberty, and even erected some places for public worship. The president of the province coming among them envied them the small cessation of their miseries, and wrote to the emperor in their prejudice. Afterwards the master of the mines coming thither, as if by an imperial rescript, divided the sufferers into classes.

Some he ordered to dwell in Cyprus, others in Libanus; the rest he dispersed and harassed with various drudgeries in different parts of Palestine. Four he singled out for the examination of the military commander, who burnt them to death. Silvanus a bishop of great piety, John an Egyptian, and thirty-seven others, were the same day beheaded by the order of Maximin. Of John it is remarked, that though blind, he had been cauterized and debilitated in one leg by a hot iron as the rest. The strength of his memory was admired among the Christians; he could at pleasure repeat from the Old or New Testament many passages in Christian assemblies. But the fact proves something more than what Eusebius mentions, namely, that he had made the best use of his eyes, while he was possessed of them.

And here we close the account from Eusebius of the martyrs of Palestine. For eight years the East with little intermission groaned under the most heavy persecution. In the West their sufferings abated after two years. The political changes of the Empire account for the difference. But both in the East and the West, Satan was permitted to exert his malice in the keenest manner, in this last of the Pagan persecutions. And the Divine power and wisdom in still preserving a real Church on earth was never more conspicuously displayed, since the days of the Apostles. The time of an external triumph of the Church, under Constantine, was at hand. Those, who look at outward things alone, may be tempted to think, how much more glorious would the Church have appeared at that time, without the previous desolations of Dioclesian's persecution. But when it is considered, how much Christian doctrine had decayed, and how low holy practice had fallen, the necessity of so sharp a trial to purify the Church, and fit her at all for a state of prosperity, is evident. Otherwise the difference between Christians and Pagans might have been little more than a name.

I know it is common for authors to represent the great declension of Christianity to have taken place only after its external establishment under Constantine. But the evidence of history has compelled me to dissent from this view of things. In fact we have seen, that for a whole generation previous to the persecution, few marks of superior piety appeared. Scarce a luminary of godliness existed, and it is not common in any age for a great work of the Spirit of God to be exhibited, but under the conduct of some remarkable Saints, Pastors, and Reformers. This whole period, as well as the whole scene of the persecution is very barren of such characters. Not but that many precious children of God suffered in much patience and charity. But those, who suf-

lured with very much of a different spirit, found no pastor to discountenance their self-will and false zeal; a sure sign, that the true spirit of martyrdom was very low, compared with what had formerly been the case. And the prevalence of superstition on the one hand, and the decay of Evangelical knowledge on the other, are equally apparent. Christ crucified, justification purely by faith, and the effectual influences of the Holy Ghost, together with humbling views of man's total apostacy and corruption, these were ideas at least very faintly impressed at that day on Christian minds. It is vain to expect Christian faith to abound without Christian doctrine. Moral, and philosophical, and monastical instructions, will not effect for men what is to be expected from Evangelical doctrine. And if the faith of Christ was so much declined, (and its decayed state ought to be dated from about the year 270), we need not wonder, that such scenes as Eusebius hints at without any circumstantial details, took place in the Christian world.* He observes that pastors of Churches were condemned to take care of camels, and to feed the emperor's horses. Even he, who was far from seeing in a due light the cause of the declension of piety in their departure from the faith, was struck with the moral effects, and could not but revere the Divine justice in giving unworthy ministers a punishment adapted to their crimes. He speaks also of the ambitious spirit of many, in aspiring to the offices of the Church, the ill-judged and unlawful ordinations, the quarrels among confessors themselves, and the contentions excited by young Demagogues in the very relics of the persecuted Church, and the multiplied evils which their vices excited among Christians. How much declined must the Christian world be, which could thus conduct itself under the very rod of Divine vengeance? Yet let not the infidel or profane world triumph. It was not Christianity, but the departure from it, which brought on these evils; and even in this low state of the Church, there was much more moral virtue, than could be found any where else; and the charitable spirit of many in suffering shewed, that God had yet a Church upon earth. The reader is however prepared to conceive aright of the state of the Church, when Constantine took it under his protection, and to judge how far a national establishment was beneficial or prejudicial to it in future. Of this he could scarcely judge with any propriety, unless well-informed of its previous spiritual condition. But before we enter upon this, some facts, more or less connected with the persecution, the civil state of the Empire, so far as it

may throw light on the history of the Church, and the manner how the persecution closed, will call for our attention.

Of all the martyrologies of this persecution, none are more replete with horror than those which describe the sufferings of Taracus, Probus, and Andronicus, at Tarsus in Cilicia.—But I suppose by this time, the reader has seen a sufficient specimen of scenes, which admit of no entertainment, no colouring, no embellishment. One of the best lessons to be learnt from them is, that here human nature is discovered in the height of its enmity against God: and any man may see, of what malignity he is capable, if left at large to his own dark designs. I looked over the acts of these martyrdoms, which are rather tedious; I suppose Mr. Gibbon also did the same, and his remark on what he had read, is this, that there was an asperity of behaviour in the martyrs, which might irritate the magistrates. But are words to be compared to deeds? What if torments so terrible, so unprovoked, inflicted on innocent worthy citizens, did extort a few passionate complaints and indignant speeches? this was the case I see with Andronicus, and it is all that is blame-worthy, which appears on the face of the narrative. Is this to be an apology, or even an extenuation for such barbarous persecutions? Taracus firmly owned the truth. On being asked, whether he did not worship two Gods, because he worshipped Christ, he confessed that "Christ was God, being the son of the living God; he is the hope of Christians; he saves us by his sufferings." Probus on being required to sacrifice to Jupiter, says, "What to him who married his sister, that adulterer, that unchaste person, as all the poets testify?" In such testimonies as these, truth was delivered without violation of decorum. It was not so in the whole of these scenes. But enmity knows not what candour means, and lest such bigots to infidelity as Mr. Gibbon, should misconstrue what I have said of the great decline of godliness in the Christians of these times, it ought in justice to be owned in their favour, that a persecution, which intended their total destruction, was carried on against a race of men, who were even then with all their faults, the most loyal, peaceable, and worthy citizens in the whole Empire.

But providence was raising up a Protector for his Church. The Emperor Constantius lying at the point of death, desired his partner in the East Galerius, to send him home his son Constantine. The eastern emperor, having delayed as long as possible, sent him at last, and the son arrived in Britain just in time to see his father alive, who was interred at Eborac-

* C. XII, Martyr of Pal.

• See Fleury, B. IX.

cam.* Constantine succeeding gave the most perfect toleration to Christians, so far as his power extended. Providence was still with him in enlarging his kingdom, that, like another Cyrus, he might give peace and liberty to the Church. Rome and Italy were for some time under the power of Maxentius, the son of Dioclesian's colleague Maximian. This Prince attempted the chastity of a Roman matron, who by suicide prevented his base designs. Had she been a Pagan, as Lucretia, her impatience under the hand of God were not to be wondered at; but she professed Christianity, yet her action is highly praised by Eusebius; fresh proof of the taste of the times in religion. But Maxentius, though a tyrant of the basest character, never seems to have been, strictly speaking, a persecutor of the Christians, and Constantine at length coming from France into Italy, subverted his kingdom, and became sole master of the Western world. It was in his expedition against Maxentius, that he is said to have seen the miracle of the cross, the consideration of which will more properly excite our attention, when we come to consider his religious character and proceedings. Maximian also, whose daughter Constantine had married, after various attempts to recover the power which by the influence of Dioclesian he had resigned, was put to death by his son in law for attempting his destruction.

Galerius himself in the year 310 was smitten with an incurable disease: all his lower parts were corrupted: physicians and idols were applied to in vain: an intolerable stench spread itself over the palace of Sardis, where he resided: he was devoured by worms; and in a situation the most dreadful continued a whole year. Softened at length by his sufferings, in the year 311 he published an edict, by which he took off the persecution from the Christians, allowed them to rebuild their places of worship, and desired them to pray for his health. Thus did God himself subdue this haughty tyrant. Prisons were opened, and among others Donatus, the friend of Lactantius,⁷ who had been confined six years, recovered his liberty.

Galerius had exceeded all emperors in hostility to Christ; but one cannot easily fix the limit of the human passions. Maximian, who reigned in a subordinate capacity in the East, was even his superior in the arts of persecution. Paganism was expiring, and it behoved the Prince of darkness to find or qualify an agent, who should dispute every inch of ground with persevering assiduity.

Maximian, equally unmoved by the example of Constantine on the one hand, and

the extorted clemency of Galerius on the other, suppressed the edict of the latter, and contented himself with giving verbal orders to stop the persecution. The prætorian prefect Sabinus, however, declared the will of the emperor in favour of toleration, which had all the effect his humanity wished. The prisoners were released, the confessors were freed from the mines, the highways were full of Christians, singing psalms and hymns to God, as they returned to their friends, and Christendom at length wore a cheerful aspect in the world. Even Pagans were melted; and many who had joined in the attempt to extinguish the Christian name, began to be convinced, that a religion, which had sustained such repeated and such formidable attacks, was divine and invincible.

But this calm lasted not six whole months.⁸ Galerius, a few days after his edict, expired, his body being altogether corrupted. Without entering into a minute description of his sufferings, which are particularized by Eusebius and Lactantius, it is perfectly right to observe, that he who delighted so long to make men feel the most exquisite misery, might say at last with Adoni-bezek,⁹ "As I have done, so God hath requited me." Maximian attempted to succeed him in all his eastern dominions; but was prevented by Licinius, whom Galerius had nominated Augustus, and who took possession of Asia Minor. But Syria and Egypt with their dependencies remained still under Maximian. Here he renewed the persecution with much malevolence and artifice. Under certain pretences, he forbade Christians to assemble in their church-yards, and then he privately procured petitions from various cities, which desired that the Christians might not be encouraged in their precincts. This was a refined species of policy, in which he was assisted by Theotecnus, the governor of Antioch. This man had hunted the Christians from their places of confinement, and had caused the deaths of many. He now set up an oracle of Jupiter, and consecrated the idol at Antioch, with new ceremonies. Jupiter gave out, that the Christians ought to be banished from the city, and Maximian was informed, that it was his duty both on motives of piety and of policy, to persecute the Christians. All the other magistrates of the cities, subject to Maximian, acted the same part as Theotecnus, and petitions were sent by the Pagan inhabitants, begging the expulsion of Christians.

Maximian, furnished with plausible pretences for renewing the persecution, commenced it again. Through every city and village, idolatrous priests were appointed, and High-priests over them of a new institution, who applied themselves with great

* New York.

⁷ De Mort. persecut.

⁸ Euseb. B. IX. C. II. sec.

⁹ Judges I. 7

diligence to the support of declining paganism: they offered sacrifices with great assiduity. Persons of quality filled the highest offices of idolatry, and pains were taken to prevent Christians from building places of worship, or from following their religion in public or private; and the former method of compelling them to sacrifice was renewed. To render his new priests more respectable, Maximian clothed them with white mantles, such as were worn by the ministers of the palace. Incited by the example of the tyrant, all the Pagans in his dominions exerted themselves to contrive the ruin of Christians, and human ingenuity was put to the stretch, to invent calumnies in support of the kingdom of darkness.

When falsehood and slander are paid for by governments, they will not want employers.

Certain acts of Pilate and our Saviour were forged full of blasphemy, which, by Maximian's approbation, were circulated through his dominions, with orders to facilitate the publication of them in all places, and to direct schoolmasters to deliver them to youth, that they might commit them to memory. A certain officer at Damascus also engaged some infamous women to confess, that they had been Christians, and privy to the lascivious practices which were committed on the Lord's Day in their assemblies. These and other slanders were registered, copied, and sent to the emperor, as the authenticated confession of these women, and he circulated them through his dominions. The officer, who invented this calumny, destroyed himself sometime after by his own hand. But a specious pretence was now given for augmenting the persecution. Maximian, affecting still the praise of clemency, gave orders to the prefects, not to take away the lives of Christians, but to punish them with loss of eyes, and various amputations. The abominations of this tyrant in other respects, dreadful and uncommon as they were, come not within our province. His labours against Christianity, alone, belong to our subject. Nor did he strictly abstain from shedding blood at this season, though one would think the experience of so many years should have taught him, as well as the other tyrants, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.

There appears, however, a plan of polite refinement in this renewed persecution beyond any thing, which had yet been practiced. Maximian did not now, as he had done formerly under Galerius, slay indiscriminately, or put to death numbers with exquisite torture. A few bishops and persons of Christian renown were deprived of life, the rest were harassed by every other kind of suffering short of death, and no arts were left unemployed to root Christianity out of

the mind, and educate the next generation in a confirmed aversion to it. The decrees of cities against Christians, and besides them, the copies of imperial edicts engraved in brassen tables, were nailed up and seen in every town. Nothing like this had been done before. The persecution, in this its last stage, had arrived at the perfection of diabolical ingenuity. Children in schools daily sounded Jesus and Pilate, and other things invented to asperse the gospel.

A rescript of the emperor's nailed to a post at Tyre manifests, with what pleasure and joy he had received the petition of that city against the Christians, venerates Jupiter and the rest of the gods, as the authors of all good, appeals to the experience of the inhabitants how happily their affairs had proceeded, since the worship of the ancients had been restored, how they were now blest with good harvests, had no plagues, earthquakes, and tempests, and enjoyed peace through the empire, and how opposite to all this the case had been, while Christendom prevailed. He desires that such as persisted still in their error should be banished from Tyre, according to the prayer of the petition. This rescript was a specimen of the rest, and it cannot be denied, that either Maximian, or some persons about him, were men of capacity, industry, and activity, though surely a worse cause was never found for the exertion of these talents.

Never were Christian minds so dispirited and clouded. Thus low did God suffer his Church to fall, to try its faith, and to purify it, in the furnace. Art was more poisonous than rage, and the deceptions seemed calculated to impose (if it were possible) even on the elect. Very remarkable however was the divine testimony to his church; at this time, man's extremity was the opportunity in which the truth and goodness of God appeared most conspicuous. There were doubtless many praying spirits at that time wrestling with their God, to appear for his Church, and he did so, in this manner. While the messengers were on the road with rescripts similar to that at Tyre, a drought commenced, famine unexpected oppressed the dominions of Maximian; then followed a plague and inflamed ulcers. The sore spread over the body, but chiefly affected the eyes, and blinded many. And the Armenians, the allies and neighbours of the eastern empire entered into a war with Maximian; they were disposed to favour the gospel, and Maximian by extending his persecution to them, drew on their hostility. Thus were the boasts of Maximian confounded. The plague and famine raged in the most dreadful manner, and multitudes lay unburied; while the Christians, whose piety and fear of God being stirred up on this occasion, were the only persons who employed themselves in doing

good, every day burying themselves in taking care of the sick, and burying the dead, whereas numbers of Pagans were neglected by their own friends; they gathered together also multitudes of the famished poor, and distributed bread to all; thus imitating their heavenly Father, who sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. Christians still appeared to be superior to all others; and the Church was known yet to exist by fruits peculiarly her own, to the praise of her God and Saviour.

Toward the end of the year 312, died the emperor Dioclesian, who had reigned prosperously for twenty years, in the latter part of which time he commenced the persecution, and abdicating the throne not long after, he lived seven years a private life; happy, had he done so on motives of piety. But the mischiefs which his authority introduced continued under tyrants more ferocious than himself; and he lived not only to see these mischiefs without power to check them, if he had been so disposed, but also what probably more afflicted his mind, to find his daughter Valeria, the widow of Galerius, and her mother, his own wife Prisca treated with great injustice by his successors, and to solicit their release in vain. Worn out with grief and vexation, he ended his days at length, a monument of the instability of all human greatness. He lived not to see the catastrophe of his wife and daughter, who, after a long course of sufferings, were put to death by Licinius. It is foreign to the design of this history to particularize their story, which, after all, is very mysterious. Why they should be so much persecuted, first by Maximin and then by Licinius, we know not. A conjecture may be made, but it must be considered only as a conjecture. The two princesses had doubtless favoured the gospel in the days of their grandeur, and had defiled themselves with sacrifices to appease Dioclesian. Might they not afterwards suffer for the sake of the gospel itself, though their persecutors might not choose to represent them as suffering on account of Christianity? If so, the princesses sustained the cross with more fidelity than formerly. Maximin was surely capable of all this inhumanity, and that Licinius also was so, though for sometime a friend of Christians, will appear hereafter.

In the year 313 there was a war between Licinius and Maximin, who contended each for the complete sovereignty of the East. Before the decisive battle Maximin vowed to Jupiter, that if he obtained the victory, he would abolish the Christian name. Licinius, in a dream,^b was directed to supplicate with all his army the supreme God, in a solemn manner. He gave directions to his soldiers

to do so, and they prayed in this field of battle, using the very words which he had received in his dream. In all this I see nothing suspicious, nothing but what is in its own nature very credible, when I consider that the contest between Jehovah and Jupiter was now at its height, and drawing to a crisis. Victory decided in favour of Licinius. Maximin, in consequence of this,^c published a cautious decree, in which he forbade the molestation of Christians, but did not allow them the liberty of public worship. Warned by former experience of his enmity, the Christians in his dominions dared not to assemble themselves together. Whilst the rest of the Christian world, under the auspices of Constantine and Licinius, who published a complete toleration of Christianity, together with that of all other religions, enjoyed peace and tranquillity.

It was the will of God to lay his hand still more heavily on the tyrant. Struck with rage at his disappointments, in the sad reverse of his affairs he slew many priests and prophets of his gods, by whose enchantments he had been seduced with false hopes of universal empire in the East, and finding most probably that he gained no friends among Christians by his late edict, he published another in their favour as full and complete as that of Constantine and Licinius. So amazingly were affairs now changed, that contending emperors courted the favour of the poor persecuted Christians. After this he was struck with a sudden plague over his whole body, pined away with hunger, fell down from his bed, his flesh being so wasted away by a secret fire, that it consumed and dropped off from his bones, his eyes leaped out of their sockets; and in his distress he began to see God passing judgment on him.^d Frantic in his agonies he cried out, "It was not I, but others who did it." At length by the increasing force of torment, he owned his guilt, and every now and then implored Christ, that he would compassionate his misery. He confessed himself vanquished, and gave up the ghost.^e

Thus closed the most memorable of all the attacks of Satan on the Christian church. Since that time he has never been able to persecute Christians, as such, within the limits of Roman civilization in Europe. I thought the account of the most violent attempt to eradicate the gospel, ever known,

^a Euseb. B. X. C. IX.

^b Lactantius tells us, that the immediate cause of his death was poison which he drank in his fury. But I think Eusebius' account more probable, because Lactantius allows that he lived four days under torture.

^c It is remarkable, that all the associates of Maximin in his crimes, partook also of his punishments. Among these Cæsar the bloody governor of Thebæ, and Theoctenus, are distinguished. His enchantments were, by torments under the authority of Licinius, compelled to lay open the frauds of their employers, and he and they, with all the children and relations of the tyrant, were destroyed.

^d Lact. de M. P.

deserved to be distinctly related. If some things happened more approaching to the nature of miracles, than ordinary history knows, the greatness of the contest shews at once the propriety of such signal divine interpositions, and renders them more credible. The present age affects a scepticism more daring than my preceding one; but in every age before this, all sober and considerate persons have agreed, that the arm of God was lifted up in a wonderful manner, at once to chastise and to purify his Church, and also to demonstrate to men, even the proudest and the fiercest of his enemies, till they themselves were obliged to confess the Christian religion, that the gospel was divine, and must stand in the earth invincible, that the most High ruleth, and that he will have a Church in the world, which shall glorify him, in spite of earth and hell united, and that this Church contains in it all that deserves the name of true wisdom and true virtue.

CHAPTER II.

A VIEW OF THE STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION ON ITS ESTABLISHMENT UNDER CONSTANTINE.

THE emperor from early life had some predilection in favour of Christianity. His father Constantius, like Agrippa, had been almost persuaded to be a Christian, and probably the same fear of man and the same love of the world operated as a check upon both. This, however, we are informed concerning him, that he condemned the polytheism of the times, and worshipped one God, the maker of all things; that he had multitudes of Christians in his palace, and among these, ministers of the gospel, who openly prayed for the emperor. The knowledge of these things, joined to the remarkable contrast between the moral character of his father, and that of the other emperors, must have made some impression in favour of the Christian religion on the intelligent spirit of Constantine, though more pungent views of internal depravity and guilt be needful to induce the mind to enter fully into the spirit of the gospel. But even a worldly mind may feel the need of divine assistance, when dubious under the prospect of important secular events. And Constantine marching from France into Italy against Maxentius, on an expedition, which was likely either to exalt or to ruin him, was oppressed with anxiety. Some God he thought needful to protect him. The God of the Christians he was most inclined to respect; but he wanted some satisfactory proof of his real existence and power, and he neither understood

the means of acquiring this, nor could he be content with the atheistic indifference, in which so many generals and heroes since his time have acquiesced. He prayed, he implored with much vehemence and importunity: and God left him not unanswered. While he was marching with his forces, in the afternoon, the trophy of the cross appeared very luminous in the heavens, higher than the sun, with this inscription, "Conquer by this"^a He and his soldiers were astonished at the sight. But he continued pondering on the event till night. And Christ appeared to him when asleep, with the same sign of the cross, and directed him to make use of the symbol as his military ensign. Constantine obeyed, and the cross was henceforward displayed in his armies.^b

Constantine, who hitherto was totally unacquainted with Christian doctrine, asked the pastors, who this God was, or what was the meaning of the sign. They told him, that it was God, the only begotten Son of the only true God,^c that the sign was the trophy of the victory, which he when on earth had gained over death. At the same time, they explained to him the causes of his coming, and the doctrine of his incarnation. From that time Constantine firmly believed the truth of Christianity. He would have acted irrationally, if he had not; and it were an inexcusable want of candour to ascribe to motives merely political a course of conduct in favour of Christianity, in which he persevered to his death; and which was begun, at a time when the ascendancy both of the Christian cause and the success of his arms, as connected with it, were extremely dubious. He began after this to read the Scriptures, and zealously patronized the pastors of the Church all his days. Whether he really loved the gospel, and felt its influence on his own heart is a doubtful question; but that he believed it to be divinely true, is certain, if a consistent and long course of actions be admitted as evidence.

^a ΤΟΥΤΩ ΝΙΚΩ.

^b I give the narrative of Eusebius as concisely as possible. It is proper to add, that he tells us he had the story of the miraculous appearance in the heavens from the emperor himself a long time after, and that confirmed by an oath. He, who is determined not to believe Christianity to be divine, will doubtless disbelieve this miracle, from the same spirit which has induced him to harden his heart against much more striking evidence. With such an one, I would not converse on the subject. But to those who admit the divine origin of Christianity, if any such doubt the truth of this miracle, I would say, that it seems to me more reasonable to admit a divine interposition in a case like this, especially considering the important consequences, than to deny the veracity of Eusebius or of Constantine. On the former view, God acts like himself, condescending to hear prayer, leading the mind by temporal kindness to look to him for spiritual blessings, and confirming the truth of his own religion: on the latter, two men not of the best, but surely by no means of the worst character, are unreasonably suspected of deliberate perjury or falsehood. ^c I suspect Eusebius expresses here his own sense of the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, which will be considered hereafter, his words are ΤΟΝ ΜΟΝΟΝ ΥΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΤΕΡΟΣ.

^c Euseb. Life of Constantine XVII.

It belongs to civil history to describe the civil and military transactions of this warlike and magnanimous prince. He was¹ no sooner made master of Rome by the destruction of Maxentius, than he honoured the cross by putting a spear of that form into the hand of the statue erected for him at Rome. He now built churches, and shewed great beneficence to the poor. He encouraged the meeting of bishops in synods, he honoured them with his presence, and employed himself in continually aggrandising the church. In the mean time his partner in the East, Licinius, began to persecute it.

Notwithstanding the proofs which this man had had of the divine interposition in favour of the gospel, during his contest with Maximin, the force of old prejudices imbibed under Galerius operated at length, in conjunction with the native depravity of the human heart, to induce him to renew the persecution. He prohibited Christian synods in his dominions, expelled believers from his court, and forbade the women to attend the public assemblies of men, and ordered them to furnish themselves with separate teachers of their own sex. He dismissed from his armies those who refused to sacrifice, and forbade any supplies to be afforded them in their necessities. He proceeded still further. He murdered bishops, and destroyed churches. At Amasia, in Pontus, his cruelty was particularly distinguished. He used enchantments, and once more Satan made a feeble attempt to recover by his means the ground he had lost. It was not probable, that Licinius should take these steps without quarrelling with Constantine, and a war commenced soon between the two princes. Licinius put the truth or falsehood of the gospel on the event of the war. It was an unwarranted appeal, but God answered him in his own way. He lost in the issue both his empire and his life. It is remarkable, that one of Constantine's soldiers, who parted with the banner of the cross in battle to save his life, lost it, while he, who in his room supported and upheld the banner, was preserved. It were to be wished, that there had been as much zeal at this time to support the doctrines and realise the power of the cross, as there was to honour its formalities. But this was far from being the case.

For neither in Constantine, nor in his favourite bishops, nor in the general appearance of the church, can we see much of the spirit of godliness. Pompous apparatus, augmented superstitions and unmeaning forms of piety, much show and little substance appears. This is the impression, which the account given by Eusebius has left on my

mind. As the matter of my history is very scanty here, I shall endeavour to compress it into a small compass, chiefly with a view to catch the face of Christianity at this period, and to pave the way for a more complete understanding of the great controversy, which must soon arrest our attention.

If we look at the external appearance of Christianity, nothing can be more splendid. An emperor, full of zeal for the propagation of the only divine religion, by edicts restores every thing to the church of which it had been deprived, indemnifies those who had suffered, honours the pastors exceedingly, recommends to governors of provinces to promote the gospel, and though he will neither oblige them nor any others to profess it, yet he forbids them to make use of the sacrifices commonly made by prefects, he erects Churches exceedingly sumptuous and ornamental, with distinctions of the parts corresponding in some measure to those in Solomon's temple, discovers with much zeal the sepulchre of Christ at Jerusalem, real or pretended, and honours it with a most expensive sacred edifice. His mother Helena fills the whole Roman world with her munificent acts in support of religion, and after the erection of Churches and travelling from place to place to evidence her zeal, dies before her son, aged eighty years. Nor is the Christian cause neglected even out of the bounds of the Roman empire. Constantine zealously pleads, in a letter to Sapor king of Persia, for the Christians of his dominions, he destroys idol temples, prohibits impious pagan rites, puts an end to the savage fights of gladiators, stands up with respectful silence to hear the sermon of Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, the historian, furnishes him with the volumes of the Scriptures for the use of the churches, orders the observation of the festivals of martyrs, has prayers and reading of the Scripture at his court, dedicates churches with great solemnity, makes Christian orations himself, one of which of a considerable length is preserved by the historian his favourite bishop, directs the sacred observation of the Lord's day, to which he adds that of Friday also, the day of Christ's crucifixion, and teaches the soldiers of his army to pray by a short form made for their use.

It may seem invidious to throw a shade on this picture; but though the abolition of lewd, impious, and inhuman customs must have been of great advantage to society, and the benefits of Christianity compared with paganism to the world appear very strong by these means, yet all this, if sound principle be wanting, is but form and shadow. As it was difficult to clear Origen of depreciating the divinity of Christ, so it is still more difficult to exculpate Eusebius, with whom he was a favourite author. Not to anticipate

¹ His victory over the tyrant was providentially striking; and the credulity of Maxentius and the failure of the heathen oracles, which encouraged him to proceed against Constantine, are no less remarkable. But this is civil history.

what will more properly pass under examination hereafter, there seems in him and some of his friends, and probably in the emperor himself, a disposition to have been silently fostered, of lessening the honours of the Son of God. In his oration at the dedication of the church at Tyre, he distinguishes between the first and the second cause, and seems very careful to give the supreme title exclusively to the Father. His sermons breathe little of Christianity, so far as I have seen them. He largely assigns various causes for the coming of Christ into the world, and though among these he gives some place to the work of redemption and sacrifice for sin, he speaks of them slightly, and as it were, by the bye. I have observed also that, in one place of his writings, he speaks in a very subordinate manner of the Holy Ghost, though it must be confessed, he is so rhetorical, and indistinct in his theological discourses, that it is difficult to extract any determinate propositions from him.

But the great defectiveness of doctrine failed not to influence the practice as usual. External piety flourished, monastic societies in particular places were also growing; but faith, love, heavenly mindedness, appear very rare; yet among the poor and obscure Christians I hope there was far more godliness, than could be seen at courts, and among bishops and persons of eminence. The doctrine of real conversion was very much lost, or external baptism was placed in its stead; and the true doctrine of justification by faith, and the true practical use of a crucified Saviour for troubled consciences, were scarce to be seen at this time. There was much outward religion, but this could not make men saints in heart and life. The worst part of the character of Constantine is, that as he grew older, he grew more culpable, oppressive in his own family, oppressive to the government, oppressive by eastern superfluous magnificence, and the facts to be displayed will shew, how little true humility and charity were now known in the Christian world, while superstition and self-righteousness were making vigorous shoots, and the real gospel of Christ was hidden from men who professed it.

The schism of the Donatists, as its history throws some light on the manners of Christians, will deserve a few words in this place. During the cessation of the persecution in the West, while it raged still in the East, on the death of Mensurius bishop of Carthage, a council of neighbouring bishops was called, for the appointment of his successor. The council was thinner than had been usual, by the management of Botrus and Celsinus, two persons who aspired to the office, whose ambition was however disappointed, the election falling on Cæcilian the deacon. All that was essential in the ap-

pointment of a bishop was observed in this transaction; for Cæcilian had confessedly the suffrage of the whole church. The two disappointed persons protested against the election, and were joined by Lucilla, a rich lady, who for a long time before had been too haughty to submit to discipline. One Donatus of Casae nigrae, who had been a schismatic before this time, offered himself as the chief of the faction. A number of bishops co-operated with him, piqued that they had not been called to the ordination of Cæcilian. Seventy bishops, a number of whom had been traitors,¹ met thus together at Carthage, to depose Cæcilian.

The reader will conceive in a strong light, how corrupt the pastors of the African church must have been at that time, when such a number met to impose a bishop on the church of Carthage against the general sense of the Christians at that place, and were at the same time unable to object any one crime, or support the least material accusation against the pastor who had the hearts of the people. Yet they persevered, and ordained one Majorinus a servant of the factious lady, who to support the ordination gave large sums of money, which the bishops divided among themselves.

Such is the origin of the famous Donatist schism, the second class of dissenters who have appeared in the records of the church; but as in their origin, so in their manners and spirit all along they seem unworthy to be compared with the first class, the Novatian, which still existed. With these last a degree of real spirituality existed, with the former there does not appear to have been any.²

It would be tedious to enter into a detail of Constantine's proceedings with respect to this sect. Undoubtedly he had a great respect for whatever he conceived to be Christian. With much candour and patience he examined and re-examined the case of this people; and the issue was constantly to their disgrace. They stirred up magistrates to deprive the Christian pastors of the benefit of the imperial laws, which exempted them from public offices, and endeavoured to deprive them of their churches, till the emperor was at last provoked to confiscate the places of their assemblies. Silvanus, one of the Donatist bishops, being convicted of having delivered up the vessels of the church, and of being simonically ordained a bishop, and of having deprived the Christians of their church, was sent into banishment with some others of the faction. Yet such was the kindness of Constantine toward the Christian name, that he recalled them from their banishment, and granted religious toleration

¹ A name of infamy given to those who, to save their lives in the persecution, had delivered the Scriptures or goods of the church to the persecuting powers.
² Fleury, B. IX.

to the party, of which lenity they continued to make an unworthy use.

How corrupt is human nature ! the church has outward peace, and even prosperity. Yet feuds, contentions, and the most unworthy spirit of avarice and ambition appear very prevalent. So ungrateful were men for that admirable administration of Providence, which as we have seen took place in their favour. Another scourge seemed quickly necessary, a scourge generated from their own vices indeed, though evidently of divine appointment, for the chastisement of the church. Satan saw his time ; pure doctrinal truth was now too commonly mere speculation. Men were ripe for a perversion of doctrine. Lower or ambiguous views of Christ were secretly rising amidst the Platonic studies of learned men. Origen gave the first handle ; Eusebius the historian with cautious prudence was fomenting the evil. And at length a bold and open assault was made against the Deity of the Son of God, and persecution was stirred up against Christians by those who wore the Christian name. The people of God were exercised, refined, and improved, while the Christian world at large was torn in pieces with violence, intrigue, and scandalous animosities, to the grief of all, who loved the Son of God, and walked in his ways in godly simplicity.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROGRESS OF THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY TILL THE DEATH OF CONSTANTINE.*

PETER, bishop of Alexandria, had suffered martyrdom under the Dioclesian persecution. Numbers had recanted at that time to save their lives, and among the rest, Meletius, an Egyptian bishop. This man was of a schismatical and enterprising spirit, and having been deposed by Peter before his martyrdom, he separated himself, continued bishop on his own plan, ordained others, and gave rise to the third species of Dissenters : THAT is the proper name of the Meletian party ; for they are not charged with corruption in their doctrine. Nor was this the only person who disturbed the Church, and exercised the patience of Peter. Arius of Alexandria, in his beginnings, was a promising character, but on the appearance of the Meletian party, he espoused their cause. Sometime after, he left it, and reconciled himself to Peter, and was by him ordained deacon : but condemning the bishop's severity in rejecting the Meletian baptism, and exhibiting a restless and factious spirit, he was again expelled from the church : after which Peter was

called to his rest by martyrdom ; he was, like Cyprian, too severe in rejecting the baptism of Schismatics and Heretics, but his zeal was doubtless from a desire of preserving the uniformity of Christian faith, and he did not live to see still stronger proofs of that turbulent and contentious spirit in his deacon, which has rendered the name of Arius so famous in history.

Achillas had succeeded to the bishopric, and from him Arius, by submissions, again obtained favour. Understanding and capacity will command respect, and these were undoubtedly possessed by Arius in a great degree. He was by nature formed to deceive. In his behaviour and manner of life he was severe and grave : In his person tall and venerable ; and in his dress almost monastic. He was agreeable and captivating in conversation, and well skilled in logic and all the improvements of the human mind, then fashionable in the world.†

Such was the famous Arius, who gave name to one of the most powerful heresies which ever afflicted the church of Christ, and of whom Cicero's words, with little variation, in his masterly character of Cataline,‡ might be delivered, " had he not possessed some apparent virtues, he would not have been able to form so great a design, nor to have proved so formidable an adversary." He, who does much mischief in deceiving souls, must at least have a fair appearance of morals. Paul of Samosata wanted this, and he glittered only as the insect of a day.

Achillas advanced Arius to the office of Presbyter, which in that church was more important than in others, because each presbyter had a distinct congregation of his own, and was not sent up and down to different churches, at the discretion of the bishop, as the general practice had been in the primitive church. This practice, however, in time gave way to the Alexandrian custom. Alexander, the successor of Achilles, under Constantine, treated Arius with respect, and appeared very backward to censure him for his dangerous speculations in religion. The pride of reasoning seduced the presbyter to assert,§ that there was a time when the Son of God was not, that he was capable of virtue or of vice, and that he was a creature, and mutable as creatures are. Whilst he was insinuating these things, the easiness of Alexander in tolerating such notions was found fault with in the church. Necessity roused him at length, however unwilling, to contend, and in disputing before Arius and the rest of his clergy,¶ he affirmed that there was an union in the trinity. Arius thinking

* See his Oration pro Celso.—*Neque unquam ex illis tam acerbatus impetus exitisset, nisi tot villorum tanta immunitas quibusdam facilitatis et patientie radicibus niteretur.*

† Sosomen, B. 15.

‡ Socrates, I. 3.

§ Sosomen, B. I. c. 15.

* Socrates, I. 6.

that the bishop introduced Sabellianism, eagerly maintained the extreme which is opposite to that heresy, and said, "if the Father begat the Son, the begotten had a beginning of existence; hence it was evident there was a time when he was not."

I have given the narration from the two historians rather with a view to connect and reconcile them, than from a conviction that this dispute arose from Alexander's zeal to withstand the growth of Arianism. For it might have originated from his orthodox zeal in general, before Arius had yet distinctly broached his notions. Be that as it may, Arius evidently split on the common rock of all heresies, a desire of explaining by our reason the modes of things which we are required to believe on divine testimony alone. Many of the clergy joined the disputations presbyter, and it was no longer in Alexander's power to prevent a solemn cognizance of the cause. He was himself cautious and slow in his proceedings,* while many persons of a grave cast, and able and eloquent, like Arius, espoused and fostered the infant heresy. Arius preached diligently at his church, diffused his opinions in all companies, and gained over many of the common people; a number of women who had professed virginity espoused his cause; and Alexander saw the ancient doctrine of the church undermined continually.† Lenient measures and argumentative methods having been tried in vain, he summoned a synod of bishops, who met at Alexandria, condemned Arius's doctrine, and expelled him from the Church, with nine of his adherents.

What Arius really held may be distinctly stated from the concurrent testimony of friends and enemies. Already some secret and ambiguous attempts had been made to lessen the idea of the divinity of the Son of God. While his eternity was admitted by Eusebius the historian, he yet was not willing to own him co-equal with the Father. Arius went greater lengths; he said, That the Son proceeded out of a state of non-existence; that he was not before he was made; that he, who is without beginning, has set his Son as the beginning of things that are made, and that God made one, whom he called Word, Son, and Wisdom, by whom he did create us. From these, and such like expressions, it is evident what Arianism properly is: for the epistle of Arius himself,‡ preserved by Theodoret, represents his views in the same manner as his adversaries have done, and proves that no injustice was done to him in this respect.‡

It is an easy thing to say here, that silence and charity would have been the best means of preserving peace on all sides: but then this mode of speaking supposes that the controversy was frivolous. No real Christian can think it unimportant, whether his Saviour be believed to be the Creator or a creature. The soul is of too great consequence for men to hazard its salvation on they know not what. And it then appeared to all humble and charitable Christians, that to persist in blaspheming God was at least as practical an evil as to persist in drunkenness and theft. All these found themselves obliged to join with Alexander against Arius. Silence was a vice in this case, though it can never be enough lamented how little care was taken of humility and charity, of both which the exercise is perfectly consistent with the sincere zeal for the doctrine of the trinity; but true religion itself was low; the face of the church was "sullied and dishonoured, yet still divine." And amidst the numbers who, from fashion, prejudice, or worse motives, joined with the Alexandrian bishop, we must look for those, though they are hard to be found, who feared God, and whose history alone is the subject before us. The principles of Arius exclude him and his followers, and by the fullest light of antiquity their actions exclude them also.

therefore the most authentic of all records, to decide the question, what Arianism is.

The Epistle of Arius to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia.

To my most desirable lord, the faithful man of God, the orthodox Eusebius, Arius persecuted by father Alexander unjustly, for the sake of truth, which conquers all things, of which you are the defender; joy in the Lord. My father Ammonius coming to Nicomedia, it appeared to me my duty to address you by him, and at the same time to inform your rooted charity and kind disposition, which you have towards the brethren, for the sake of God and his Christ, that the bishop harasses and persecutes us greatly, and moves every machine against us, so as even to expel us from the city as Atheists, because we agree not with him who publicly says, "Always God, always the Son: at the same time the Father, at the same time the Son: the Son co-exists with God without being begotten: he is always begotten, yet unbegotten; God does not precede the Son in thought, not for a moment: always God, always the Son: the Son exists from God himself." And when Eusebius your brother in Caesarea, and Theodotus, and Paulinus, and Athanasius, and Gregory, and Actius, and all the bishops in the east, said, that God, who had no beginning, existed before the Son, they were condemned, except only Philogonius, and Elicianus, and Macarius, heretical unlearned men, some of whom call the Son an eructation, others a projection, others begotten together with him. We cannot bear to hear these impieties, were the heretics to threaten us with ten thousand deaths. But what we say and think, we have both taught and do teach: That the Son is not unbegotten, nor a part of the unbegotten, by any means, nor of any subject matter: but that by will and counsel he existed before the times and the ages, full God, only begotten, not mixed with any thing heterogeneous, and before he was begotten, or created, or defined, or founded, HE WAS NOT; for he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say THE SON HATH A BEGINNING: but GOD is without beginning. For this we are persecuted, and because we say, that the Son is from NON-EXISTENCE, and thus we said, because he is not part of God, nor of any subject matter: for this we are persecuted: the rest you know. I pray that you may be strong in the Lord, —remembering our afflictions.

• Not the famous Athanasius.

* Socrumen, B. I. c. 15.

† Theod. B. I. c. 2. See Cave's Life of Athanasius.

‡ Theod. B. I. c. 3.

• I shall give the reader the epistle at length, that he may judge for himself, though some parts of it are of no consequence with respect to the controversy. I believe, it is the only fragment we have of his writings, and it is

The Christian world was now the scene of animosity and contention. The orthodox and the heretical did each their utmost to support their several pretensions: practical religion was too much forgotten by both, and the former from the want, or at least from the very low state of experimental religion, were deprived of the very best method of supporting the truth, by shewing its necessary connection with the foundation of true piety and virtue. The Gentiles beheld and triumphed, and on their theatres ridiculed the contentions of Christians, to which their long and grievous provocations of their God had justly exposed them. Alexander repeatedly, in letters and appeals, maintained his cause, and so far as speculative argumentation can do it, he proved his point from the Scriptures, while Arius strengthened himself by forming alliances with various bishops, and particularly with Eusebius of Nicomedia,* who supported Arianism with all his might, who had been translated from Berytus in Syria, and who by living in the metropolis, (for there Constantine resided much) had an opportunity of ingratiating himself with the emperor. Near an hundred bishops in a second synod at Alexandria condemned Arius, who was now obliged to quit that place, and try to gain supporters in other parts of the empire.

In the year 324 Constantine being at Nicodemia, and intending to make a farther progress into the East, was prevented by the news of these contentions. So important were Christian affairs now grown, at a time when it is with difficulty we can find any eminent spirit of genuine piety. The emperor sincerely strove to make up the breach; for his regard for Christianity in general was doubtless sincere; but it is not in ecclesiastical proceedings that we can discover any trace of that penetration and discernment for which in civil story he is so justly renowned. He wrote both to Alexander and Arius, blamed both, expressed his desire for their agreement, and explained nothing. He sent the letter by Hosius bishop of Corduba, one whose faith and piety had been distinguished in the late persecutions. Hosius endeavoured to make up the breach; but it was impossible. The two parties were formed, and were determined; worldly motives were too predominant in both to admit of an easy compromise; and it was not in the power of those who loved both truth and peace to sacrifice the latter to the former, consistently with a good conscience, however sincerely desirous they must have been of promoting both. For the object of

contention was not a trifle, but a fundamental in religion.

Constantine now took the resolution of summoning the aid of the whole Christian church, and the Nicene council calls for our attention.

The bishops, collected from all parts of the Christian world, met at Nice in Bithynia: and their number, according to the account of Athanasius, who was present, amounted to three hundred and eighteen. Of these, if we may believe Philostorgius the Arian historian, twenty-two espoused the cause of Arius, others make the minority still less. Be that as it may, as many Presbyters were there besides the bishops, it is not probable, that the whole number of persons assembled in the council was less than six hundred.

They met in the year 325, being transported to Nice in public conveyances at the emperor's expense, and maintained at his cost, while they resided there.

Before the immediate business of the synod was entered upon, their attention was engaged by the attempts of some Gentile philosophers, who appeared among them; some with a design to satisfy their curiosity concerning Christianity itself, others wishing to involve the Christians in a cloud of verbal subtilties, and to enjoy the mutual contradictions of the followers of Christ. One of them distinguished himself above the rest by the pomp and arrogance of his pretensions, and derided the clergy as ignorant and illiterate. On this occasion an old Christian, who had suffered with magnanimous constancy during the late persecutions, though unacquainted with logical forms, undertook to contend with the philosopher: Those who were more earnest to gratify curiosity than to investigate truth, endeavoured to raise a laugh at the old man's expense; while serious spirits were distressed to see a contest apparently so unequal. Respect for the man however induced them to permit him to engage. And he immediately addressed the philosopher in these terms:—"Hear, Philosopher," says he, "in the name of Jesus Christ. There is one God the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, who made all these things by the power of his Word, and confirmed them by the holiness of his spirit. This Word, whom we call the Son of God, compassionating the sons of men involved in error and wickedness, chose to be born of a woman, to converse with men, and to die for them; and he will come again the Judge of all things which men have done in the body; that these things are so, we believe in simplicity: do not then labour in vain, seeking to confute things which ought to be received by faith, and investigating the manner in which these things may or may not be:

* I use the language of the times in calling the Pagan world Gentiles.

† He must not be confounded with Eusebius of Cæsarea the historian.

but if thou believest, answer me, now that I ask thee." Struck with this plain authoritative address, the philosopher said, "I do believe;" with pleasure owned himself vanquished, confessed that he embraced the same sentiments with the old man, and advised the other philosophers to do the same, swearing that he was changed by a divine influence, and was moved by an energy which he could not explain."

Men will draw their conclusions from this story, according to their different tastes and views. A self-sufficient reasoner will despise the instruction it contains; but he who thinks with St. Paul, will consider the whole story as no mean comment on his words, that your "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," nor will he much regard the prudence of those who labour to accommodate Christian ideas to the spirit of unbelievers, by which they only weaken themselves, and abate not in the least the enmity of their opposers. They will think it better to go forth in simple dependance on God, trusting that he will bless his own word with victorious energy. Such know that even in our own times, there want not instances of conversions of the same kind; and those who are still disposed to object, should at least be told, that the story has all the proper marks of historical credibility, whatever inferences they may be pleased to draw from it.

I fear we shall not find in the whole Nicene business so instructive a narrative. The Emperor himself came to the synod, and exhorted them to peace and unanimity. A number of mutual accusations having been presented to him, he threw them all into the fire, protesting that he had not read one of them, and charged them to forbear and forgive one another. After this very candid and generous procedure, he gave them leave to enter directly on the business of the synod. They canvassed the doctrine of Arius, extracted his propositions out of his own writings, and argued the subject with great reluctance; Constantine himself acting as moderator, and endeavouring to bring them to perfect agreement. But it soon appeared, that without some explanatory terms, decisively pointing out what the Scriptures had revealed, it was impossible to guard against the subtilties of the Arians. Did the Trinitarians assert, that Christ was God? the Arians allowed it, but in the same sense as holy men and angels are styled Gods in Scripture. Did they affirm that he was truly God? the others allowed, that he was made so by God. Did they affirm that the Son was naturally of God? it was granted: for even we said they, are of God, of whom are

all things. Was it affirmed, that the Son was the power, wisdom, and image of the Father? we admit it, replied the others, for we also are said to be the image and glory of God. Such is the account^a which Athanasius gives of the disputations. He was at that time deacon of the church of Alexandria, and supported his bishop with so much accuracy and strength of argument, as to lay the foundation of that fame, which he afterwards acquired by his zeal in this controversy. What could the Trinitarians do in this situation? to leave the matter undecided was to do nothing; to confine themselves merely to Scripture-terms, was to suffer the Arians to explain the doctrine in their own way, and to reply nothing. Undoubtedly they had a right to comment according to their own judgment, as well as the Arians; and they did so in the following manner. They collected together the passages of Scripture, which represent the Divinity of the Son of God, and observed that taken together they amounted to a proof of his being of the SAME SUBSTANCE WITH THE FATHER, *ὁμοουσιος*. That creatures were indeed said to be of God, because not existing of themselves, they had their beginning from him, but that the Son was peculiarly of the Father, being of his substance, as begotten of him.

It behoves every one who is desirous of knowing simply the mind of God from his own word to determine for himself, how far their interpretation of Scripture was true. The Council however was, by the majority before stated, convinced, that this was a fair explanation, and that the Arian use of the terms, God, true God, and the like, was a mere deception, because they affixed to them ideas, which the Scriptures would by no means admit. So the most pious Christians have thought in all ages since. But to censure the council for introducing a new term, when all that was meant by it was to express their meaning of the Scriptures, however fashionable, appears unreasonable to the last degree. To say, that they ought to have confined themselves to the very words of Scripture, when the Arians had first introduced their own gloss, seems much the same, as to say that the Trinitarians had not the same right with the Arians to express their own interpretation of Scripture, and in their own language.

The great patron of the Arians was Eusebius of Nicomedia, who wrote a letter to the council, in which he found fault with the idea of the Son of God being uncreated. The whole Arian party presented also their confession of faith. Both that and the letter of Eusebius were condemned as heretical. The venerable Hosius of Corduba was

^a Sozomen, B. I. c. 18.

^a See Cave's Life of Athanasius.

appointed to draw up a Creed, which is in the main the same that is called the Nicene Creed to this day. It soon received the sanction of the council, and of Constantine himself, who declared, that whoever refused to comply with the decree, should be banished. Eusebius of Cæsarea, the historian, expressed for some time his doubts concerning the term consubstantial. He observed in a letter which he wrote on this occasion to his church, that all the mischief had arisen from the use of unscriptural terms, and that he at last subscribed to the term for the sake of peace. It would undoubtedly be unjust to accuse this great man of Arianism. Yet why was he so much disposed to favour Arius, by writing to Alexander, as if he had been wronged? why so disposed to join afterwards, as we shall see, against Athanasius? The truth is, he seems to have held a middle notion, that the Son of God was from eternity, but not Jehovah, the very same notion which was revived by the famous Dr. Clark, explained in his Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, and I think very solidly confuted by Dr. Waterland in his reply.^b

From the opinion of Eusebius thus ascertained, one may form an idea of Constantine's creed, if he had any distinct one in his mind. Undoubtedly Eusebius was his great favourite, and moulded his imperial discipline, as he pleased. But let his opinions have been what they may, he seems to have been no stickler for any thing except peace and uniformity. Never was a council more free from political impediments. The bishops undoubtedly spake their sentiments without reserve in general; and Constantine was disposed to give his sanction to any creed, to which the majority should agree. We have here then the testimony of nearly the whole Christian world^c in favour of the doctrine of the proper Deity of the Son of God, a testimony free, unbiassed, and unrestrained. How can this be accounted for but hence, that they followed the plain sense of Scripture and of the church in preceding ages? As to the connection between church and state and the propriety of civil penalties in matters of religion, I may find a more proper place to dwell upon those subjects hereafter.

^b This is what is commonly called high Arianism, and secretly grows among us, the more so, because not distinctly understood, and because it is consistent with some sort of Trinitarian doctrine. It is doubtless the most suspicious of all heresies; but two questions its defenders seem incapable of answering: 1. Why Christ is so often called Jehovah, the self-existent God in Scripture? 2. How they can clear themselves of the charge of holding more Gods than one?

^c Not a few the Nicene fathers bore on their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus. Paul bishop of Neocæsarea at the banks of Euphrates, had been debilitated by the application of hot iron to both his hands: others appeared there deprived of their right eyes, others deprived of their legs. A crowd of martyrs in truth were seen collected into one body. Theodoret, B. I. c. 7

Arius was deposed, excommunicated, and forbidden to enter Alexandria. The minority at first refused to subscribe, but being advised to yield at length by Constantia their patroness, the emperor's sister, they consented. But by the omission of a single letter they reserved to themselves their own sense, subscribing not that the Son is the same, but only of a like essence with the Father.^d Honesty is however always respectable. Out of twenty-two Arian bishops, two were found who persisted in refusing. Secundus of Ptolemais, and Theonas of Marmarica, the former of whom bluntly rebuked the courtly Eusebius of Nicomedia for his dissimulation. Arius and his associates were banished into Illyricum.

The Meletian controversy was also settled. Meletius was permitted to live in his own city, with the title of bishop, but without authority. His sect was indulged in some degree, and continued a long time after in the church. The dispute concerning Easter was likewise finally adjusted in this council.

The canons appointed by this famous council will deserve a remark or two, as at least they may give us some idea of the state and spirit of Christian religion at that time.

One of them forbids clergymen to make themselves eunuchs; which shews that there were then instances of the same misguided zeal, which Origen in early life had exhibited. Another forbids the ordination of new converts, and supports itself by that well known canon of still higher authority, "not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." A third provides for the chastity of the clergy. The council were even proceeding to restrain those of them who had wives from cohabiting with them, after their ordination; but were checked by Paphnutius, a bishop of Thebias, who had lost an eye during the late persecutions. He had himself been brought up in a monastery from his childhood, and was renowned for the purity of his manners. He observed that it was sufficient, for a man once ordained to be prohibited to marry, but that he ought not to be separated from the wife whom he had married when a layman. The authority of a person so eminent in sanctity was decisive; and this species of superstition, which had already made considerable advances, was stopped for the present in its career. Moreover some care was taken in this council against the progress of covetousness in the clergy by the prohibition of the practice of usury. Translations also either of bishops, priests, or deacons from one city to another were forbidden. Eusebius of Nicomedia had been removed from Berytus,

^d Not *essentially*, but *operationally*: it is remarkable, that this duplicity of theirs is recorded by Philostorgius the Arian historian. See Cave's Life of Athanasius.

and the abuse began to grow into a custom. In all these cases, a desire of preserving purity of manners in the church, though not in all points regulated with discretion, is observable. The same remark may be extended to another canon, which regulates the reception of penitent apostates, by directing that they shall continue three years among the auditors, and shall prostrate themselves seven years. A distinction also is made between those, who evinced by good works the sincerity of repentance, and those who appeared indifferent, and were merely formal in compliance with the rules of the church. And greater rigour of penance is prescribed to the latter.*

These things shew that the fear of God was by no means extinct. Discipline, which had been relaxed toward the close of the last century, was revived, and the predominant spirit of superstition carried it, as formerly, into too great an extreme. Our age, which has lost almost all discipline in church-affairs, can scarce appreciate aright the merit of these rules, on account of the strength of its prejudices against all restraints.

Liberty was allowed to the Novatians also to return to the communion of the general church, nor was it insisted on, that they should be re-baptized, since they held nothing contrary to the fundamentals of godliness. With respect to the followers of Paul of Samosata, called Paulianists, some of which still subsisted, it was required, that if they were admitted again into the church, they should be re-baptized, because they did not baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. So accurately did they distinguish between a heretic and a schismatic, between essentials and circumstantialia. Apostolical discernment and piety, in no contemptible degree, animated the spirits of the Nicene fathers, notwithstanding the decline of piety from the primitive times. Constantine, zealous for a pacific uniformity, had invited Acesius a Novatian bishop to the council, and asked him whether he assented to the decrees concerning the faith, and the observation of Easter. The council, says he, has decreed nothing new concerning these things. So I have always understood the church has received even from the times of the Apostles. Why then, says the emperor, do you separate yourself from our communion? Because, replied Acesius, we think that to apostatize is the "sin unto death," and that those who are guilty of it ought never to be restored to the communion of the church, though they are to be invited to repentance, and to be left to God, who alone has the power of forgiving sins. Constantine, who saw that his views were impracticably severe, said, "set up a ladder, Acesius, and climb up to heaven by yourself."

* Flcury, B. XI. 16.

Socrates[†] tells us, that he had this from a very credible old person, who had seen these things done in the council. He means most probably the Novatian dissenter, with whom he was intimately acquainted. Candour and moderation appear very visible in Socrates as an historian, and render him as credible a writer as any guide of those times. On this very respectable evidence then it is manifest, that a Novatian bishop, whose passions could no way be heated by the internal contentions of the general church, believed the common doctrine of the Trinity, and believed that it had always been common. The narrowness of the Novatian principle of dissent prevented not the soundness of his faith and the general integrity of his mind. Nor is there any blemish laid to the charge of this people, except excessive severity. And it ought to be acknowledged to the honour of Constantine and the Nicene fathers, that while they exercised severity in civil matters towards heretical members of their own church, they allowed and continued the religious toleration of the Novatians in its full extent. But we have surely in this case an additional proof of the antiquity of the Nicene faith. We see in what light the matter appeared to a plain honest man, who had no concern in the commotions of the times, who had nothing to obtain or to lose for himself in the contest, whose character appears unsullied, and who most probably was a pious person. He has no doubt what the common creed of the church was, and though a separatist, he affirms that she had always held the proper Divinity of Jesus Christ. I do not find that the second set of dissenters, the Donatists, were called into this council. They continued still in a tolerable state, but never seem to have had any effusion of the Divine Spirit among them. The third sort, the Meletians, seemed likely to be broken up by the death of their founder, but as he named to himself a successor, they continued still in a state of separation, though a number of them returned to the church.

Three months after the dissolution of the synod, Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nice were banished, by the emperor's command, for attempting still to support the Arian cause.

Alexander dying five months after his return home, had desired, that Athanasius might be appointed his successor. Alexandria in general joined in the same request, which the modesty of Athanasius resisted a considerable time. His integrity and his abilities however pointed him out as a proper successor to the zealous Alexander. And he was at last ordained with the strongest testimonies of general satisfaction. He was not then above twenty-eight years of age, and

he held the See sixty-six years; and for that time with little intermission was exposed to persecution on account of his zeal against Arianism; and it must be owned, that constancy and firmness in a cause were never better tried than his were, through the whole course of this period.

After the death of Helena, Constantine shewed particular kindness to Constantia his sister, who was much led by a presbyter secretly in the Arian interest. They persuaded her that Arius and his friends were unjustly condemned. She on her death-bed prevailed by her intreaties on Constantine to do justice to these men. The emperor, who seemed as much a child in religious discernment as he was a man in political sagacity, suffered himself to be imposed on by the ambiguous craft of Arius and his friend Eusebius, so as to write in their favour to the Churches.^a Eusebius also, and Theognis, by owning the Nicene faith in words, were restored to their Sees.^b The former wrote to Athanasius, desiring him to receive Arius, now returned from banishment, to communion; but in vain. Athanasius had principle, and could not sport with subscriptions and bonds, as his adversaries did. The Nicene creed had still all the sanction which Church and state could give it. It was not then possible by all the artifices of ingenious and unprincipled men to persuade the Christian world, that the Scripture held what it did not, or that their fathers had all along thought as Arius did. Even the chiefs of Arianism had been now restored, not as Arians, but as men well affected to the doctrine of the Trinity. And they attempted by subtilty and artifice to establish at length what was impossible to be done by fair argument. Determined to ruin Athanasius, if possible, they united themselves closely with the Meletians, and infected them with their heresy. They procured the deposition of Eustathius of Antioch, an eloquent and learned professor, who was on unjust pretences banished from his See; this person, before his departure, exhorted his flock to be stedfast in the truth, and his words were of great weight with that flourishing Church. He and several priests and deacons were banished. The good man bore the will of God with meekness and patience, and died in exile at Philippi. Eusebius of Cæsarea and Eustathius had opposed each other in matters of doctrine. The vacant See was now offered to the former, who prudently declined it. Asclepas of Gaza, and Eutropius of Adrianople, were driven also from their Sees. And thus while the truth was supported in form, its friends by a variety of artifices were persecuted, and its enemies triumphed. A case not uncommon in our own times! men

void of principle had every secular advantage, while those, who feared God, chose rather to suffer than to sin.

Among these Athanasius himself was eminently distinguished. To recount the various turns and changes of his life, by no means suits the design of this history: yet some account is necessary, that the reader may see BY FACTS, what sort of fruit was produced by Trinitarian, and what by Arian principles.

The repeated attempts of the adversaries of Athanasius at length so far prevailed in prejudicing the mind of the Emperor, that he ordered a synod to be convened at Tyre, not to examine the principles of the Bishop, which even his adversaries had been obliged to admit, but to institute an inquiry, whether various crimes, with which he was charged, had been really committed. In the year 335, the synod met under the direction of Eusebius of Cæsarea, and some other bishops; before whom the bishop of Alexandria, attended by certain Egyptian bishops, was obliged to appear. Here Potamo, bishop of Heraclea, who had been in prison with Eusebius during the Dioclesian persecution, enraged to see the latter on the bench, rudely addressed him thus: "Must you, Eusebius, sit on the bench, while the innocent Athanasius stands to be judged at your bar? Who can bear such proceedings? Were not you in prison with me in the time of the persecution? I lost an eye in defence of the truth; you have no wound to shew, but are both alive and whole. How got you out of prison, unless you promised to sacrifice, or actually did so?" Eusebius rose up and dissolved the meeting for that time, reproving him for his insolence. History throws no light on the subject of Potamo's aspersions; nor does he seem to have had any proof to support them. Nevertheless Eusebius, who himself so much supported the calumnies vented against Athanasius, had of all men the least right to complain. He suffered the same things which he inflicted on others; and Satan having deeply embroiled the passions of men, continued thus to irritate and to inflame the Christian world.

The heaviest crimes were charged upon Athanasius, rebellion, oppression, rape, and murder. But every thing appeared to be the result of malice. One case alone shall be mentioned, by which a judgment may be formed of all the rest. He was said to have murdered Arsenius, a Meletian bishop; for proof of which the accusers produced a box, out of which they took a dead man's hand, dried and salted, which they affirmed to be the hand of Arsenius, and that it was preserved by Athanasius for magical purposes. The Meletians charged Arsenius to conceal himself till they had effected their purpose. The party of Eusebius of Nicomedia spread the report through the Christian world, that

^a Sozomen, B. II. c. 27.

^b Ibid. B. II. c. 16.

Arsenius had been privately murdered by the bishop of Alexandria, and Constantine himself, overcome by incessant importunities, was induced to order an inquiry to be made.¹

Athanasius had learned by his own experience, that any accusation against himself, however improbable, was likely to find numerous and powerful supports. But Providence wonderfully confuted this attempt. Arsenius, notwithstanding the directions of the accusers to keep close, had privately conveyed himself to Tyre, intending to be sequestered there during the whole time of the synod. It happened, that some servants belonging to Archelaus the governor heard a rumour whispered, that Arsenius was in town. This they immediately told their master, who found him out, apprehended him, and gave notice to Athanasius. The Meletian too unwilling to blast his employers, and feeling the awkwardness of his situation, at first denied himself to be Arsenius. Happily Paul the bishop of Tyre, who knew the man, deprived him of that refuge. The day of trial being come, the prosecutors boasted, that they should give ocular demonstration to the court of the guilt of Athanasius, and produced the dead hand. A shout of victory rung through the synod. Silence being made, Athanasius asked the judges, if any of them knew Arsenius? Several affirming that they did, Athanasius directs the man to be brought into the court, and asks, is this the man whom I murdered, and whose hand I cut off? Athanasius turns back the man's cloak, and shews one of his hands; after a little pause, he put back the other side of the cloak and shews the other hand. "Gentlemen, you see, said he, that Arsenius has both his hands; how the accusers came by the third hand, let them explain." Thus ended the plot to the shame of the contrivers.

That any persons, who bear the name of Christ, should deliberately be guilty of such villany, is grievous to think. But let it be remembered, that the real faith of Christ was opposed by those, who were concerned in this base act, and that enmity to the doctrine of the trinity produced it. The story itself deserves also to be preserved as a memorable instance of the interposition of Divine Providence.

Notwithstanding the clearest proofs of Athanasius's innocence, and that the whole course of his life was extremely opposite to such crimes as he was charged with, his enemies prevailed so far, that commissioners were dispatched into Egypt to examine the matters of which he was accused. Yet John, the Meletian bishop, the chief contriver of the plot, confessed his fault to Athanasius, and begged his forgiveness. And Arsenius himself renounced his former connections,

and desired to be received into communion with the Alexandrian prelate.

Egypt, where Athanasius must have been best known, was faithful to her prelate. Forty-seven bishops of that country entered a protest against the injustice of the council, but in vain. The Arian commissioners arrived at Alexandria, and endeavoured to extort evidence against him by drawn swords, whips, clubs, and all engines of cruelty.² The Alexandrian clergy desired to be admitted to give evidence, but were refused. To the number of fifteen presbyters and four deacons they remonstrated, but to no purpose. The Maræotic clergy took the same steps, but to no purpose. The delegates returned with extorted evidence to Tyre, whence Athanasius, who saw no justice was to be had, had fled. They passed sentence, and deposed him from his bishopric.

Yet there were those in the synod of Tyre, who were willing to do justice to the much-injured prelate. Paphnutius, who has been before mentioned, took Maximus bishop of Jerusalem by the hand, "Let us be gone," said he, "it becomes not those who have lost their limbs for religion, to go along with such pernicious company." But the majority were very differently disposed.

Athanasius came to Constantinople, and desired justice from the emperor, and a fair trial. Constantine ordered the bishops of the synod to appear before him, and to give an account of what they had done. The greatest part of them returned home, but the genius of Eusebius of Nicomedia was not exhausted, and as he stuck at no fraud, and was ashamed of no villany, he, with a few of the synod, went to Constantinople, and waving the old accusations, he brought a fresh one, namely, that Athanasius had threatened to stop the fleet that brought corn from Alexandria to Constantinople. Constantine was credulous enough to be moved by the report: the Arian arts prevailed at court: those who used no arms but truth and honesty were foiled for the present; and Athanasius was banished to Treves in Gaul.

Arius, flushed with the success of his party, returned to Alexandria, and strengthened the hands of the heretics, who had long languished for want of his abilities. The city being torn with intestine divisions, the emperor ordered the Heresiarch to come to Constantinople, and there to give an account of his conduct. That imperial city was now the chief seat of the contention. But Providence had given her a bishop not unequal to the contest. This was Alexander of Constantinople, a man of eminent piety and integrity, whose character at least seems to have approached as near to that of a primitive Christian as did that of any persons who distinguished themselves at this period. Eu-

¹ Socrates, B. i. c. 27.

² Epist. Synod. Alexan. Athan.

sebius of Nicomedia menaced him with deposition and exile, unless he consented to receive Arius into the Church. On the one hand, the prelate knew too well the power of the Arians by what they had done already; and the Trinitarians were so far outmatched by them in subtlety and artifice, that though victorious in argument in the face of the whole world, with the council of Nice, and an orthodox emperor on their side, they yet were persecuted and oppressed, and their enemies prevailed at court. But on the other hand, it behoved not a Christian bishop to consent to the admission of a wolf, who would devour the sheep, and who could agree in form to the Nicene faith, and yet gradually insinuate his poison into the church. The mind of Alexander was directed aright in this conjuncture. He spent several days and nights in prayer alone in his church; the faithful followed his example, and prayer was made by the church without ceasing, that God would interfere on this occasion. Controversies and the arts of logic were omitted, and they, who believed that the Nicene faith was holy and of most interesting concern to the souls of men, sincerely committed their cause to God.

But Constantine himself was not to be prevailed on to admit Arius into the church, unless he were convinced of his orthodoxy. He sent for him therefore to the palace, and asked him plainly, whether he agreed to the Nicene decrees. The heresiarch, without hesitation, subscribed: the emperor ordered him to swear: he assented to this also. I follow the narrative of Socrates, one of the most candid and moderate historians, who tells us that he had heard, that Arius had under his arm a written paper of his real sentiments, and that he swore that he believed as he had written. Whether he used this equivocation or not, is far from being clear. But Socrates, who is careful to tell us that he heard this reported, assures us that he did swear in addition to his subscriptions, and that this he knew from the Emperor's epistles.¹ Constantine, whose scruples were now overcome, ordered Alexander to receive him into the church the next day. The good bishop had given himself to fasting and prayer, and renewed his supplications that day with great fervour in the church, prostrate before the altar, and attended by Macarius only, who was a presbyter belonging to Athanasius. He begged, that if Arius was in the right, he himself might not live to see the day of contest; but if the faith was true, which he professed, that Arius, the author of all the evils, might suffer the punishment of his impiety. The next day seemed to be a triumphant one to the Arians: the heads of the party paraded through the

city with Arius in the midst, and drew the attention of all toward them. When they came nigh to the forum of Constantine, a sudden terror, with a disorder of the bowels, seized Arius. He asked for a privy where he might retire and ease himself, and being told there was one behind the forum, he hasted thither, and fainted; and his bowels were poured out with a vast effusion of blood, and thus he expired.

The place of his death was memorable to posterity, and was shewn in the times of Socrates.² Such was the exit of the famous Arius. The united testimony of ancient historians leaves no room to doubt of the fact. The reflections to be made upon it will vary, as men believe and are disposed. That it is usual with God to hear the prayers of his church, and to answer them remarkably on extraordinary occasions, will not be denied by those who reverence the word of God, and who know the case of Hezekiah in the Old Testament,³ and of Peter in the New.⁴ That the danger of the church from heresy was particularly great at this time will be equally admitted by all, who believe that the Trinitarian doctrine includes within it whatever is most precious and interesting in the gospel: that here on one side an appeal was made to God in his own appointed way, in faith, prayer, patience, and sincerity, while the other side dealt in falsehood, artifice, ambition, and worldly policy, is evident from the narrative. From these premises a man who fears God will feel it his duty to believe that God interposed to comfort his Church, and to confound its adversaries. I see no method of avoiding this conclusion. The translator of Mosheim seems put to a great difficulty, when he declares it extremely probable, that he was poisoned by his enemies. A more absurd and malignant imagination never entered into the heart of man. If he was poisoned at all, it must have been by his friends; for they alone had access to him: and such things ought not to have been said without some proof or probable circumstance. Certain it is, that the fear of God rested with the Trinitarians, though it was at too low an ebb among all parties. Among these, however, nothing like such wickedness appears; while the Arians evidently seem to have been given up to the greatest villainies and profligacy. Great was the joy of the aged bishop to find that God had not forsaken his Church. What effect the event had on Constantine appears not. He died soon af-

¹ Sossomen tells us, that some time after a rich Arian bought the place, changed its form, and built there an house, that the event might gradually sink into oblivion. It must not be denied, however, that Arius also took pains to propagate his sentiments by methods more honourable than those of duplicity and fraud, in which he was so eminently versed. His historian Philostorgius, of whom some fragments remain, assures us, that he composed songs for sailors, millers, and travellers, tending to support this heresy.

² Isaiah xxxvii.

³ Acts xii.

ter, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, having first received baptism from Eusebius of Nicomedia. This he had long delayed, and the custom, from the imperial example, would naturally gather fresh strength. Superstition had by this time taught men to connect by a necessary union the forgiveness of sins with the administration of the rite: and men who loved to continue in sin protracted their baptism, to a time when they imagined it might be of the greatest advantage to them. I have nothing more to say of Constantine's religious character, than that it appears to have been much of the same sort as that of his panegyrist Eusebius, whose pompous life of this emperor gives no very favourable idea of his own views of Christianity.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROGRESS OF THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY DURING THE REIGN OF CONSTANTIUS.

The subject before us is more speculative and more secular than I could wish. I shall condense it as much as possible into a narrow compass, keeping more particularly in view the one great end of this history.

The great Constantine was succeeded by three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. The first ruled in Spain and Gaul, the second in the East, the third in Italy and Africa. The other relations of the late emperor were put to death by the soldiers. Two sons alone of Julius his brother survived, Gallus and Julian. These were spared, privately educated, placed among the clergy, and appointed readers in the church. The latter was born at Constantinople, was only eight years old at the time of his uncle's death, and was reserved to be a scourge of degenerate Christendom, and a memorable instrument of divine Providence.

Of Constantine the eldest we know but little; and that little is laudable. He sent back Athanasius to his church with great respect, and declared, that his father had intended to do the same, but was prevented by death. After a banishment of two years and four months, the bishop returned from Treves to his diocese, where he was received with general acclamations. Asclepas of Gaza and Marcellus of Ancyra, who had been deposed by Arians, with others likewise, were restored; but Constantine himself was slain by the troops of his brother Constans. He was undoubtedly steady in his adherence to the Nicene faith, but our information concerning him is too small, to enable us to form any proper estimate of his character.

His next brother Constantius furnishes but too many materials, to illustrate his disposi-

tion. One Eusebius an eunuch, his chamberlain, had great influence over him; and was himself the convert of the Arian priest, whom Constantia had recommended to her brother, and to whom also the dying emperor had intrusted his will. The empress herself, the wife of Constantius, was infected with the heresy. By degrees at least the emperor, a man of a weak understanding, corrupted with the pride of power, and ill informed in any thing that belonged to real Christianity, was confirmed in the fashionable heresy. There was then during this whole reign, which reached from the year 337, to the year 361, a controversy carried on between the church and the heretics by arms and resources suited to the genius of the parties; those of the former were prayers, treatises, and preaching; of the latter, policy, intrigue, persecution, and the friendship of the great. The most zealous supporters of anti-scriptural sentiments seem far more disposed to cultivate the favour of men of rank, than to labour in the work of the ministry among the bulk of mankind.

In the year 340 died the famous Eusebius of Caesarea. He was the most learned of all the Christians. After viewing him with some attention, I can put no other interpretation on his speculations than that which has been mentioned already.* He talks of a necessity, that there was in God to produce a middle power between himself and the angels, to lessen the infinite disproportion between him and the creature. Of the Holy Ghost he speaks still more explicitly, and represents him, as one of the things made by the Son. Nevertheless one might be disposed to put a favourable construction on various expressions of this great man, were it not that his practice is a strong comment on his opinions. He frequented the court, he associated with Arius, he joined in the condemnation of Athanasians. It really gives pain to part on such terms with the historian, whose preservation of so many valuable monuments of antiquity has been so serviceable to us; but truth must be spoken, and his case is one of the many, which shew that learning and philosophy, unless duly subordinate to the revealed will of God, are no friends to Christian simplicity: however the loud noise which in our times has been made concerning the doctrine of the Trinity being derived from Platonism should be silenced in the minds of those, who know that it was by admiration of Plato and Origen, that Eusebius himself was perverted.

At the same time died Alexander of Constantinople, aged ninety-eight years, who had been bishop twenty-three years. His clergy asked him in his dying moments, whom he

* IV. Demonstr. Evang. l. c. 6. See Fleury, B. XII. c. 6.

would recommend as his successor. If you seek a man of exemplary life, and able to instruct you, says he, you have Paul: if you desire a man of secular skill, and one who knows how to maintain an interest among the great, and to preserve an appearance of religion, Macedonius is preferable. The event shewed in what strength of discernment the aged prelate was still preserved, and how careful to his last breath he was of the propagation of evangelical purity. These two men were just such as he had described them. Paul, though young, was at once pious and discreet; Macedonius was far advanced in life, but yet was only a deacon. The Arian party during the lifetime of the venerable champion was unable to predominate in the metropolis. After his death, they endeavoured to prefer Macedonius; but the primitive ideas were too prevalent as yet among the populace, and Paul was elected. Constantius arriving afterwards was provoked at the election, encouraged an Arian council, directed its resolves, and Eusebius of Nicomedia was translated to the metropolitan See, which from this time continued under Arian government for forty years. Thus the ancient usages in choosing bishops were altered, and a precedent was set, of fixing in the hands of princes the government of the church in capital cities. A council of an hundred bishops of Egypt with Athanasius at their head, protested against these proceedings to the whole Christian world.

A council was now convened at Antioch, supported by the presence of the emperor and by the manoeuvres of Eusebius. Here they undertook to depose Athanasius, and ordain Gregory, a Cappadocian, in his room; prevailing on Constantius to direct Philagrius, the prefect of Egypt, to support their proceedings with an armed force. For the integrity and probity of Athanasius had gained him so strong an ascendancy in Egypt, that while the primitive modes of church government remained, it would have been impossible to expel him. Violence was found necessary to support iniquity, and an Arian prince was obliged to tread in the steps of his pagan predecessors, to support what he called the church.

His views were prompted with vigour. Virgins and monks were cruelly treated at Alexandria: Jews and Pagans were encouraged to murder Christians.⁴ Gregory himself entered the church with the governor and certain Pagans, and caused a number of the friends of Athanasius to be scourged and imprisoned. The persecuted prelate himself, who wanted not courage and capacity to resist, acted however a much more Christian part. He fled from the storm, and made his escape to Rome.

This happened in the year 342. It was a memorable season for the church of God, which now found her livery to be that of persecution, even when Pagans had ceased to reign. Gregory would not even suffer the Athanasians to pray in their own houses, who in great numbers still refused to own the Arian domination. He visited Egypt in company with Philagrius. The greatest severities were inflicted on those bishops who had been zealous for the Nicene faith, though the decrees of the council had never been reversed, and the Arians as yet contented themselves with ambiguous confessions and the omission of the term consubstantial. Bishops were scourged and put in irons. Potamo, whom we have before celebrated, was beaten on the neck, till he was thought to have expired; he recovered in a small degree, but died some time after. His crime in the eyes of the Arians was doubtless an unvaried attachment to the Nicene faith.

While Gregory dealt in violence, his competitor used only the more Christian arms of argument. He published an epistle to the Christian world,⁵ exhorting all the bishops to unite on the occasion. "The faith is not now begun," says he, "it came to us by the Lord from his disciples. Lest what has been preserved in the churches until now perish in our days, and we be called to an account for our stewardship, exert yourselves, my brethren, as stewards of the mysteries of God, and as beholding your rights taken away by strangers." He goes on to inform them of the proceedings of the Arians, observing that the like had not happened in the church since the ascension of our Saviour. "If there were any complaint against me, the people should have been assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the spirit of ordination; all things should have been examined regularly, and in the presence of the clergy and people; a stranger should not have been intruded by force and the authority of secular judges, upon a people who neither require nor know him." He begs the bishops "not to receive the letters of Gregory, but to tear them, and treat the bearers with disdain as ministers of iniquity." It cannot be denied, that his arguments were sound, and that his cause was just. The Arians must bear the infamy of being the first who secularised the discipline of the church. But in adding the close of the letter, I mean the reader to remark the decline of the spirit of the Gospel at this time. As on the one hand it were very unfair to confound the Athanasians and the Arians as on an equal footing in point of piety and morality, when the superiority of the former is too evident to admit of a dispute, so on the other hand it is certain, that the experimental use

⁴ Apolog. Athan. 2. Fleury, B. II. 14.

⁵ Athan. VI. p. 945.

of the divinity of Christ, by no means employed an equal degree of the zeal of its patrons with the abstract doctrine itself. Hence Athanasius, though always firm and constantly sincere, fails in meekness and charity.

This great man continued an exile at Rome for eighteen months under the protection of Julius the bishop. Thither fled many others whom the Arian tyranny had expelled from their Sees. Eusebius of Constantinople died soon after in the fullness of that prosperity, which his iniquity and oppression had procured him. Human depravity under religious appearances had in him attained a rare degree of maturity. And the only lesson which his life affords seems to be this, to warn the clergy to beware of secular ambition and the spirit of the world, which so exceedingly depraved this dignitary, that he at length became one of the most memorable villains in history. A double election followed his death, that of Paul and that of Macedonius. Hermogenes, master of the militia, was ordered by the emperor to banish Paul. He did so, and Paul's friends, exasperated by a series of persecutions, forgot the character of Christians, and killed Hermogenes. This happened in the year 342. Paul however was then banished the city, and his holy character exempts him from all suspicion of being concerned in the outrage.

At Rome Julius in a council of the western bishops justified Athanasius, and his fellow-sufferers. Among these was Marcellus of Ancyra, whose zeal against the Arians had provoked them to charge him with Sabellianism. It is not the design of this history to enlarge on these niceties. But it is easy to conceive, how such a charge might be drawn up with specious appearances. Marcellus explained, and was cleared to the satisfaction of the council; but whether justly or not is not so evident. The progress of error is easy, where the heart is not simply stayed upon God. Athanasius himself was afterwards far from being convinced of his soundness in the faith.

Julius wrote a public letter on this occasion, in which, after doing full justice to the sufferers, he concludes in a manner not unworthy of a Christian bishop, not threatening, but advising those of the East not to do the like for the future, lest, says he, we be exposed to the laughter of Pagans, and above all to the wrath of God, to whom we must all give an account at the day of judgment.

In the year 347, a council was held at Sardica by the joint order of the two emperors, Constantius and Constans, the latter being as steady in the support of the Nicene faith as the former was in opposition. Sar-

dica was in Illyria, the border of the dominions of the two emperors. The intention was to unite, but it actually separated the two parties more than ever. Prayer, and holy breathings of soul, and judicious and affectionate preaching of practical religion were now at a low ebb. Peaceable spirits were absorbed in superstition, turbulent ones in ecclesiastical contentions. The life of faith was little known. They treated the doctrine of the Trinity as a mere speculation, and the result of their disputes was, that each party retired as they entered upon them. The Easterns finding that it was likely to be a free council, departed from it, leaving the Westerns to settle matters as they pleased. Hosius of Corduba, the venerable president of Nice, presided here also, and the Athanasian cause was decided in the favour of the Alexandrian prelate. They made also some canons, in which they condemned the translation of bishops. The pious and zealous spirit of Hosius was chiefly concerned in these things. Remarkable are the words—"A pernicious custom must be rooted out. None have been found to pass from a greater bishopric to a less. Therefore they are induced by avarice and ambition." So reasoned and so ordained this council. But where the religion of the Holy Ghost, the religion of faith, hope, and charity exist not, the canons of councils forbid in vain. There are several canons also against the journeys of bishops to courts, and enjoining their residence. The time also of bishops remaining in another Diocese was fixed, in order to prevent the supplanting of their brethren. These things shew the times: rules are not made, except to prevent abuses, which already exist.

The easterns met at Philippopolis in Thrace, and excommunicated their brethren of the west; and for some time the two parties remained distant in this manner; while in Asia and Egypt the friends of the Nicene faith were treated with great cruelty. Into Europe the subtleties of this contention had not yet entered; men were there more simple, and followed the primitive faith in quietness and peace.

In Antioch the Arian bishop Stephen was found too corrupt and profligate to be continued in his dignity by his own party. Leontius, who succeeded him, supported the Arian cause. Diodorus, an Ascetic, and Flavian, afterwards bishop of Antioch, stirred up the faithful to a zeal for religion, and passed whole nights with them at the tombs of the martyrs. Leontius finding them to have the affection of the people, wished them to do this service in the church. And here I apprehend was a nursery of real godliness, but the account is very imperfect.

In the year 349 died Gregory, the secular bishop of Alexandria, as he may be justly called. Then it was that Constantius, intimidated by the threats of his brother Constantine, wrote repeatedly to Athanasius to return into the east, and to assure him of his favour and protection. The exiled prelate could not easily credit a man who had persecuted him so unrighteously. At length he complied, and after visiting Julius at Rome, who sent a letter full of tenderness to the church of Alexandria in favour of Athanasius, he travelled to Antioch, where Constantius then was, by whom he was very graciously received. The emperor ordered him to forget the past, and assured him with oaths, that he would receive no calumnies against him for the future. While Athanasius was at Antioch, he communicated with the Eustathians, who, under the direction of Flavian, held a conventicle there. This same Flavian was the first who invented the doxology, "Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" and in the singing of the Psalms, not only those who frequented his meeting made use of it, but in general all who favoured the Nicene faith in the church of Leontius did the same, in opposition to the Arian doxology, *Glory to the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Ghost*. So earnest were the two parties against each other. Leontius was a confirmed Arian, but of a milder temper than the rest of his party. He saw that it was by force only that he was in possession of his church; numbers of people still professing the Nicene faith. He dared not therefore oppose the Trinitarian hymns, and laboured to preserve peace in his own time; but touching his white hair, he said on the occasion,—"When this snow shall melt, there will be much dirt," hinting at the dissensions which he imagined would arise after his death.

Constantius observed to Athanasius, that as he now put him into possession of all his Egyptian churches, he ought to leave one for the Arians. The Alexandrian prelate confessed it would be just, on condition also that the same liberty was allowed to the Eustathians at Antioch. The Arian party, however, sensible of the superior popularity of their opposers, thought it most prudent to wave the proposal.^u

The return of Athanasius to Alexandria was a triumph. Religious zeal and joy appeared in the garb of the age, by a number devoting themselves to a monastic life. Acts of mercy and liberality were also abundantly performed. Every house seemed to be a church set apart for prayer. Such are the views which Athanasius himself give us of the effects of his restoration: "a number of his enemies retracted, and justified him in

the most honourable manner, and among these the recantation of Ursatius and Valens is remarkable. Aclepas was also restored to Gaza, and Marcellus to Ancyra, though the latter was not unmolested. The suspicion of his unsoundness was perhaps justly increased by the less ambiguous sentiments of Photinus bishop of Sirmium, who was supposed to tread in his steps, and was in a council at that place deposed as a Sabellian by universal consent. Germinius an Arian was elected in his stead, and, then, as well as at this day, the Sabellians and the Arians in opposing each other assaulted the truth, which lay between them: the former removing all distinction between the Father and the Son, the latter establishing a distinction which took away the Trinity of the Godhead. Each desired to remove the mystery from the doctrine, and in the attempt corrupted it. While those who were taught of God, and were content with inadequate ideas, sincerely worshipped the Trinity in Unity, and mourned over the abominations of the times.

A great change in civil affairs having taken place by the death of Constantine, and the ruin of the usurper Magnentius, Constantius, now sole master of the empire, revived the persecution. About the year 351, Paul of Constantinople was sent into Mesopotamia, loaded with irons, and at length to Cucusus on the confines of Cappadocia. There, after suffering cruel hardships, he was strangled. Macedonius by an armed force, attended with much effusion of blood, took possession of the See. Paul received the crown of martyrdom, and the Arians seemed ambitious to equal the bloody fame of Galerius.

The weak mind of Constantius was again prejudiced by absurd calumnies against Athanasius, and a council at Milan was convened in the year 355, in the presence of the emperor, who proposed to them an Arian creed, which he recommended by this argument, that God had declared in his favour by his victories. Prosperity, it seems, had not strengthened his reasoning powers, but what is far worse, it had increased the depravity of his heart. Here appeared the magnanimous constancy of Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia, and the pious self-denial of Eusebius, bishop of Vercella in Italy. These prelates were animated with a sincere spirit of piety on this occasion, and answered that the Nicene faith had always been the faith of the Church. "I ask not your advice, says the emperor, and you shall not hinder me from following Arius, if I think fit." The emperor's creed was read in the church, but the people, more sincere and more simple than the great, and more willingly attached to the doctrine of the Trinity, because they read it in their bibles, rejected the faith

^u Socrates, B. III. c. 20.

^v Athan. ad Solit. See Flavius, B. XII. c. 52.

^w Theodoret, B. XI. c. 5.

of Constantius, and it was not pressed any farther. The condemnation of Athanasius was, however, insisted on, and Dionysius bishop of Milan, and the two others just mentioned, were most unreasonably required to subscribe to it. "Obey, or be banished," was the imperious mandate. The bishops lifted up their hands to heaven, and told Constantius, that the empire was not his, but God's, and reminded him of the day of judgment. He drew his sword on them in a rage, but contented himself with ordering their banishment. Hilary the deacon was stripped and scourged, and ridiculed by Ursatius and Valens, who had recanted some time ago. Hilary blessed God, and bore the indignity as a Christian. The greatest part of the bishops subscribed to the condemnation of Athanasius: a few only testified that the grace of God was still as powerful as ever in supporting his people, and in causing them to suffer gladly, rather than to sin. Others, besides the three mentioned above, joined in the same measure, particularly Maximus bishop of Naples, who was tortured in hope of forcing his submission, because of the weakness of his body. In the end he was banished, and died in exile.

Eusebius of Vercellæ was sent into Palestine, Lucifer into Syria, and Dionysius into Cappadocia, where he died soon after. Liberius of Rome was in an advanced age, when the storm which had muttered at a distance, burst upon him: He was carried before Constantius at Milan, where the eunuch Eusebius, the secret and prevalent supporter of Arianism, assisted the emperor in oppressing him. Liberius said, "Though I were single, the cause of the faith would not fail: there was a time when three persons only were found who resisted a regal ordinance." Eusebius understanding his allusion to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered, "Do you make the emperor a Nebuchadnezzar?" "No," said the bishop of Rome, but you are not less unreasonable than he, in desiring to condemn a man unheard." In the conclusion Liberius was banished into Thrace. But a character still more venerable than his was yet unsubdued, and the Arians, fiercely pursuing their victories, proceeded to the attack. Hosius, bishop of Cordoba in Spain, was now an hundred years old. He was looked on as the first of bishops, had been a confessor under the Diocletian persecution, had presided sixty years in the church, had guided the Nicene council, had been a principal person in the appointment of canons, and was held in universal respect. Constantius and the whole Christian party were sensible of the importance of such a character. Flattery and menaces were both employed to prevail on him to condemn Athanasius. A few lines of his answer to an imperious letter of the emperor's

may give us some idea of his spirit:—

"I confessed the first time in the persecution under Maximian, your great grandfather. If you likewise desire to persecute me, I am ready still to suffer any thing rather than betray the truth. It is not so much a personal malice against Athanasius, as the love of heresy which influences these men. I myself invited them to come to me and declare at the council of Sardica what they knew against him. They dared not; they all refused. Athanasius came afterwards to your court at Antioch: he desired his enemies might be sent for, that they might make good their accusations. Why do you still hearken to them who refused such fair proposals? How can you endure Ursatius and Valens, after they have recanted and acknowledged their calumny in writing? Remember you are a mortal man; be afraid of the day of judgment. God hath given you the empire, and hath committed the church to our care. I write thus through my concern for your eternal welfare; but with respect to your requisition, I cannot agree with Arians, nor write against Athanasius. You act for his enemies, but in the day of judgment you must defend yourself alone." Constantius kept him a year at Sirmium, without respect to his age and infirmities. His orders addressed to the bishops were to condemn Athanasius, and to communicate with the Arians, under pain of banishment. The judges were directed to see to the execution of these things: Ursatius and Valens, whose instability should have destroyed their credit, assisted the persecution by informations: zealous heretics by force of arms were intruded in the place of the exiled; and, Arianism seemed well-nigh to have avenged the cause of fallen idolatry.

The adventures of Athanasius himself in his sufferings were extraordinary. He was for some time preserved in the house of a pious woman with great care and fidelity. But we must not enlarge on the various hardships to which he was exposed: suffice it to mention some of the particular circumstances. Syrianus, a secular officer, came at night to his principal church at Alexandria, when the people were intent on their devotions. Numbers were murdered, others insulted and beaten. The intrepid prelate sat still in his chair, and directed the deacon to sing the cxxxvth Psalm, the people answering, according to the custom of alternate singing, "For his mercy endureth for ever." Which being finished, he bade the people return to their houses. As the soldiers advanced toward him, his clergy and people begged him to depart, which he refused, thinking it his duty to stay till they had all left the church. He was in a manner forced

out by the clergy and monks, and conveyed safe from the guards. An unavailing protest was made by the people against these violences.

The Pagans took courage, and assisted the heretics in the persecution, saying, the Arians have embraced our religion.⁷ A bishop was found worthy to support these proceedings, George of Cappadocia, who began his usurpation in the year 356. Through his influence, supported by the secular arm, the friends of the Nicene faith were cruelly beaten, and some died under the anguish. A sub-deacon having been severely scourged, was sent to the mines, without being allowed time to dress his wounds, and he died on the road. Venerable aged bishops were sent into the deserts throughout Egypt, and Arianism reigned and glutted itself in blood. The episcopal office was sold to unworthy men; the profession of Arianism being the only requisite for the office. The cruelties of George provoked the Alexandrians to retaliation, but military force prevailed, and after this bishop had been once expelled, he returned still more terrible and more detested.

So deplorably misinformed was Constantius, that in a letter to the people of Alexandria, he represents this same George as one who was very capable of instructing others in heavenly things. Athanasius having obtained a sight of this letter, was at length deterred from his intended journey to the emperor, and he betook himself to the deserts, and visited the monks, who were his most faithful adherents, who refused to discover him to his persecuting adversaries, and who offered their throats to the sword, being ready to die for the Nicene faith. He filled up another part of his time in writing his own apology to Constantius. There are in it strong traces of that rapid eloquence and clear argumentative powers, for which this father is renowned. Integrity and fervour appear throughout; but it were to be wished, that less zeal on his own account, and more on account of his divine master were visible in this as well as in his other writings. In truth, the connection of the doctrine of the Trinity with the honour of Christ and with lively faith in his mediation is so plain, that practical, serious, humble religion, if it exist at all in any scene of controversy, must be found on that side. Men, who turn the divine Saviour into a creature, will of course exalt themselves, and cannot have that humility and faith which are the essential ingredients of a holy life. I gladly remind my readers and myself, that the value of the apostolical doctrines, so fiercely persecuted in the fourth century, rests not on speculation, but on the holy tendency of their nature. There is sufficient proof of the existence of this holy tendency and in-

fluence, both in regard to Athanasius and other Trinitarians of that time; and there is also more than sufficient proof of the contrary tendency of the doctrines supported by the Arians. But it must be allowed that the evidence of the former sort is scanty: Christian godliness continued very low in all this period; and good men in their writings and reflections attended too little to the connection which subsists between doctrine and practice.

Eusebius of Vercellæ, one of the most honest and pious bishops of those times, still suffered severely in Palestine in his banishment. The persecution reached even to Gaul, which had yet happily preserved the simplicity of apostolical confession unmolested. In Constantinople, Macedonius, by the terror of his persecutions, drove those of the general church and the Novatian dissenters into a sympathy for each other, which their mutual prejudices had long prevented. Both sorts suffered extremely, being obliged to communicate with Arians, or to undergo variety of hardships. Agellus the Novatian bishop fled. A priest and a monk of their's were tortured, and the latter died by this usage. Novatianism still retained a measure of the divine Spirit, and was thus honoured with furnishing those who suffered for Jesus. This people had three churches in Constantinople, one of which was thrown down by the emperor's orders. The Novatians carried away the materials to the other side of the sea: the women and children wrought diligently, and thus it was rebuilt. In the next reign, by the emperor's permission, they carried back the materials, and rebuilt their church at Constantinople, and called it ANASTASIA.⁸ An attempt was now made to reunite those of the general church with the Novatians: the former were the more ready, because they had no place of worship at all; but the narrow bigotry, which had ever been the great fault of Novatianism, prevented the union. But we must now mention a remarkable instance of human infirmity, which calls at once for compassion and for caution. Hosius had been a year confined at Sirmium, his relations were persecuted, and he suffered in his own person both scourges and tortures. By this afflicting him, the Arian tyrant thought he served the cause; and by such inhuman measures were the patrons of the heresy stimulated to seek the destruction of godliness! Yet so infatuated was the spirit of Constantius, that he all along was liberally supporting the most expensive forms and ornaments of Christian worship, while he was labouring with all his might to eradicate Christian doctrine. Hosius, above an hundred years old, submitted at length to subscribe an Arian creed, but the

⁷ Athan. ad solit.

⁸ Sozomen, B. IV. c. 20.

⁹ This is, "rise again."

condemnation of Athanasius he would not vindicate. Permitted at length to return into Spain, he lived, however, to retract, protesting against the violence with which he had been treated, and with his last breath exhorting all men to reject the heresy of Arius; and thus we have seen to his end the most venerable character of that age, still in his heart true to his God. The length of his days only exposed him to a greater variety of suffering, and though Satan's malice was permitted to do him much mischief, he yet was enabled to die in peace, and to prove that the Lord faileth not them that are his.

In the same year, 357, Liberius of Rome, after two years exile, was not only prevailed on to receive an Arian creed, but even to reject Athanasius. The subscription to the creed was not so much an evidence of insincerity, as was the condemnation of the Alexandrian prelate, because the Arians, fertile in expedients, made creeds upon creeds, expressed in artful ambiguities, to impose on the unwary. Liberius by these unworthy means recovered his bishopric. The See of Rome at that time had secular charms sufficient to seduce a worldly mind. Whether Liberius cordially repented of his hypocrisy or not, we have no evidence. The cruelty of the Arians tried to the utmost the hearts of men in those days, and now the proverb was verified, "All the world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against all the world."

But the power of divine grace was displayed in preserving a remnant in this disastrous season, and particularly in strengthening the mind of that great man, through a long course of afflictions. He composed about this time a letter to the monks, in which he confesses the extreme difficulty of writing concerning the divinity of the Son of God, though it be easy to confute the heretics. He owns his ignorance, and calls himself a mere babbler, and beseeches the brethren to receive what he wrote not as a perfect explanation of the divinity of the word, but as a confutation of the enemies of that doctrine.

Two councils were held, the one at Rimini, the other at Selucia, both with a view to support Arianism. In the former a number of good men were artfully seduced, by the snares of the Arians, to agree to what they did not understand. This sect, now victorious everywhere, began to shew itself diminished, and to separate into two parties. But it is not worth while to trouble the reader with idle niceties, in which proud men involved themselves, while all had forsaken the simple faith of antiquity. In these confusions Macedonius lost the See of Constantinople, which was given to Eudoxius, translated from Antioch, in the year 360. Constantius poorly endeavoured to atone for

the corruptions both of principle and practice, with which he filled the church, by offering large vessels of gold and silver, carpets for the altar, of gold tissue, adorned with precious stones, curtains of gold and divers colours for the doors of the church, and also liberal donatives to the clergy, the virgins, and the widows.^b

In the mean time Christendom throughout groaned under the weight of extorted Arian subscriptions, and Macedonius, the deposed bishop of Constantinople, formed another sect of those who were enemies to the divinity of the Holy Ghost. These, by the advantage of sober manners, spread themselves among the monasteries, and increased the corruption which then pervaded the Christian world. But the vigilant spirit of Athanasius was stirred up to oppose this heresy also. "The Father cannot be Son, nor the Son Father," says he, "and the Holy Ghost is never called by the name of Son, but is called the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. The holy Trinity is but one divine nature, and one God, with which a creature cannot be joined. This is sufficient for the faithful. Human knowledge goes no farther; the cherubims veil the rest with their wings."

The See of Antioch being vacant, Meletius bishop of Sebasta, a man of exemplary meekness and piety, was chosen. The Arians supposed him to be of their party. Constantius ordered the new bishop to preach before him on the controversial subject of the Trinity: Meletius delivered himself with Christian sincerity, rebuked the rashness of men who strove to fathom the divine nature, and exhorted his audience to adhere to the simplicity of the faith. He had remained only a month in Antioch, and had the honour to be banished by the emperor, who filled up the See with Euzoius, the old friend of Arius. In consequence of this the friends of Meletius separated from the Arians, and held their assemblies in the ancient church, which had been the first at Antioch. Besides the Arians, who were in possession of the emperor's favour, there were two parties both sound in the Nicene faith, the Eustathians, before spoken of, and the Meletians, who testified in the strongest manner their regard for their exiled pastor. In the year 361, however, Constantius died of a fever, having received baptism a little before he expired from Euzoius; for after his father's example he had deferred it till this time.^c His character needs no detail: it appeared

^b Fleury, B. XIV. 33.

^c A fact related of him by Theodoret enables us to fix the religious character of this prince. When he was going to carry on war with Magnentius, he exhorted all his soldiers to receive baptism, observing the danger of dying without that sacred rite, and ordering those to return home who refused to submit to it. Not infidelity, but superstition predominated in his mind. Yet how inconsistent to defer his own baptism so long!

from his case, that a weak man armed with despotic power was capable of doing incredible mischief in the church of Christ.

CHAPTER V.

A VIEW OF MONASTICISM AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY UNDER CONSTANTINE TO THE DEATH OF CONSTANTINE.

It seemed most convenient to preserve the connection of the Arian controversy without interruption. If the evangelical reader has not gained much information concerning the spirit of true religion during this violent contest, the times and the materials must bear the blame. There were probably in that whole period many sincere souls, who mourned in secret over the abominations of the age; but history, ever partial to the great, and dazzled with the splendour of kings and bishops, condescends not to notice them. The people of God were in lower life and remain therefore unknown. We left Athanasius in the desert, where he employed the leisure, which the iniquity of the persecution gave him, in visiting the monks. He had been acquainted with their most renowned leader Anthony, but had not the satisfaction to meet with him again, he dying in the beginning of the year 356. Let us leave Athanasius and the Arian controversy a while, and see what we can find concerning monks, and other particulars of the dealings of God with his church in the mean time.

We are not to form an idea of ancient monks from modern ones. It was a mistaken thing in holy men of old to retire altogether from the world. But there is every reason to believe the mistake originated in piety. We often hear it said, how ridiculous to think of pleasing God by austerities and solitude! Far be it from me to vindicate the superstitions of monks, and particularly the vows of celibacy. But the error is very natural, has been reprehended much too severely, and the profaneness of men of the world is abundantly more dangerous. The enormous evils of monasticism are to be ascribed to its degeneracy in after-times, not to its first institution. What could for instance be better intentioned, than the determination of Anthony to follow literally our Lord's rule, "Sell what thou hast and give to the poor?" Say that he was ignorant, and superstitious; he was both: but he persevered to the age of an hundred and five years in voluntary poverty with admirable consistency. Surely it could be no slight cause that could move a young person of opulence to part with all, and live in the abstemiousness of a solitary life with such unshaken perseverance. Let us, from the memorials of his life written by

Athanasius, omitting the miracles which the then fashionable credulity imposed on men, endeavour to collect, as far as we can, a just idea of his spirit.

Athanasius tells us that he had often seen him, and had received information concerning him from his servant. It was a great disadvantage to Anthony's judgment, that he was unwilling to be instructed in literature. There is a medium in all things secular. We have seen numbers corrupted by an excess of literary attachments: we see here one misled by the want of proper cultivation. When a youth, he had heard read in the church our Lord's words to the rich young man, and his ignorance led him to sell all, and give to the poor, and enter into the monastic life. Monks as yet had not learned to live in perfect deserts unconnected with mankind, and hitherto they lived at a small distance from their own village. Anthony endeavoured to form himself on the severest models, and pushed the genius of solitude to rigours before unknown. His fame increased; he was looked on as a mirror of perfection, and the Egyptians were studious to follow his example. His instructions to those who listened to him are not, in general, worth transcribing. The faith of Christ is very obscure at least in the best of them; yet his sincerity is evident; his love to divine things must have been ardent; his conflicts and temptations, which are confusedly written by Athanasius, demonstrated a mind too humble, and knowing too much of himself to trust in his own righteousness. He preached well by his life, and temper, and spirit, however he might fail in doctrinal knowledge.

In the persecution of Dioclesian he left his beloved solitude, and came to Alexandria, strengthening the minds of Christian sufferers, exposing himself to danger for the love of the brethren, and yet not guilty of the excess of delivering up himself to martyrdom. In all this there was what was better than the monk, the sincere and charitable Christian. Nor did he observe to perfection the rules of solitude. There were two sorts of monks, the solitary, and those who lived in societies. Anthony, though he had a strong inclination to follow the first sort altogether, sometimes joined the latter, and even on some occasions appeared in the world.

The Arian heresy gave him another opportunity of shewing his zeal. He again entered Alexandria, and protested against its impiety, which he observed was of a piece with heathenism itself. "Be assured," said he, "all nature is moved with indignation against those, who reckon the Creator of all things to be a creature." And this is one circumstance, which convinces me, that genuine godliness, the offspring of Christian principles, must have been with the primitive monks, because they generally vindicated the

Nicene faith, and could not endure Arianism. They must, many of them at least, have felt the motions of the divine life, which will not connect itself with any principles that depreciate the dignity of Jesus Christ.

In conversing with Pagan philosophers, he observed, that Christianity held the mystery, not in the wisdom of Grecian reasoning, but in the power of faith supplied to them from God by Jesus Christ. "Faith," says he, "springs from the affection of the mind; Logic from artificial contrivance. Those who have the energy that is by faith, need not perhaps the demonstration that comes by reasoning." He very justly appealed to the glorious fruits of Christianity in the world, and exhorted the philosophers "to believe, and know that the Christian art is not merely verbal, but of faith which worketh by love, with which ye being once endowed, shall not need demonstrations by arguments, but shall deem these words of Anthony sufficient to lead you to the faith of Christ."

The evangelical reader will see here something better than mere monasticism. But he sullied all this by a foolish attempt, to make mankind believe, that he lived without food, while he ate in secret, and by a vain parade of conversation concerning temperance, which savoured more of Pythagorean fanaticism than of Christian piety. In his extreme old age he gave particular directions, that his body should be interred, not preserved in a house after the Egyptian manner of honouring deceased saints and martyrs, and charged his two attendants to let no man know the place of his burial. "At the resurrection of the dead I shall receive my body," says he, "from the Saviour incorruptible." He guarded his friends against the Arian heresy, and bade them not be disturbed, though the judicial power, an imaginary fading domination, should be against them. "Do you observe what ye have received from the fathers, and particularly the pious faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, which ye have heard from the Scriptures, and of which I have often reminded you. Divide my clothes in this manner. Give one of my sheep-skins to the bishop Athanasius, together with the garment, which I received from him when new, and now return him when old. And give the other sheep-skin to Serapion the bishop. The sackcloth keep for yourselves," says he to his two attendants. "Farewell, children, Anthony is going, and is no more with you." He stretched out his feet, and appearing pleased at the sight of his friends coming to him, he expired with evident marks

of cheerfulness on his face. His last will was punctually executed. Such was the death of this father of monasticism: the account is taken wholly from his life by Athanasius, and is a monument of the genuine piety and deep superstition both of the monk and his biographer. Such was the state of godliness in those times, living obscure in hermitages, while abroad in the world the gospel was almost buried in faction and ambition; yet probably in ordinary life it thrived the best in some instance, though quite unknown.

By the assistance of Fleury it would be easy to enlarge the history of men of this sort. There were others of great monastic renown in the time of Anthony. But their narratives, if true, are neither entertaining, nor instructive, and a great part of them at least is stuffed with extravagant fables. Let us turn to other objects. At the time when the bishops were travelling to the council of Nice, Licinius bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia arrived at a small town called Nazianzum in Cappadocia in his way thither. There he met with Gregory, afterwards bishop of Nazianzum, who applied for baptism. This man had led a life of great moral strictness, belonging to a particular sect, who observed the Sabbath and a distinction of meats, like the Jews. His wife Nonna was an exemplary Christian, and was very instrumental in her husband's conversion. There is reason to hope it was a conversion from self-righteous pride to the humble faith of Jesus. Licinius instructed him: he received baptism, and some years afterward, was made bishop of the place, and remained in that office forty-five years to an extreme old age. Though late in life, when he applied himself to Christian learning, he acquired a just discernment, preserved his flock from the spreading infection of Arianism, and mollified the manners of the barbarous people. Possibly the memoirs of his pastoral labours, if we had them, would be found more instructive than most of the subjects which engage our attention in this period. Gregory's episcopal character commenced about the year 328. And this tribute seemed due to his memory and to that of his wife, not only on their own accounts, but also because they were the parents of the famous Gregory of Nazianzum, who in an oration celebrates their piety.

If we look to the situation of the ancient heretics, we find them in a dwindling state. The followers of Marcion, Valentinian, and the rest, still subsisted indeed, and an edict of Constantine forbade their assembling together. Under this Act of Uniformity the Novatians were condemned also. Thus the best of the Dissenters were not permitted to worship in their own way, while the Donatists, the worst, were in a manner tolerated.

^a Possibly the attentive reader may observe without any mentioning it, that I have seen, on a closer inspection, reason to think better of Anthony, than what appears from the short account of him in the preceding page.

But in vain do we look either for wisdom or equity in the ecclesiastical proceedings of Constantine or any of his family in general. Two sects alone of the persecuted ones (for neither the Meletians nor the Donatists were mentioned in the edict, as far as one can judge) subsisted, and weathered the force of the decree. The old heresies were crushed, while the enthusiastic Montanists maintained their hold in their native Phrygia, and the Novatians remained still numerous, retaining narrow views of church-discipline, and with these a considerable strictness of manners, and it is hoped, the good influence of the Divine Spirit. But we want better materials for the history of this people.

At the very time, when Athanasius was persecuted at Tyre, and was thought unworthy to live at Alexandria, the bishops were employed also in dedicating the church of the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem. Its magnificence was a monument of the ostentatious superstition of Constantine. It is foreign to our design to describe its expensive pomp. On this occasion Jerusalem, which from the time of Adrian had been called *Ælia*, recovered its name, became the resort of Christian pilgrims, was vainly represented^a by some as the new Jerusalem described by the prophets, and was adorned by sermons, acts of liberality, and panegyrics on the emperor. In these things the historian Eusebius was signally distinguished. Here Arius was received; and thus that Scripture was fulfilled concerning the hypocrisy of professors in the Christian times, "your brethren that hated you, and cast you out for my name's sake, said, let the Lord be glorified." The enmity against real godliness was washed over with a parade of external piety; pomp supplanted the room of sincerity, and formality usurped the place of spiritual understanding.

Not long before his death Constantine wrote to Anthony the monk, and begged an answer. The reflection which he made on the occasion shewed at once his ignorance of secular affairs, and his knowledge of divine things. Be not astonished, says he, if an emperor writes to you. He is but a man; rather be astonished, that God should write a book for man, and deliver it to us by his own Son. He answered the emperor, desiring him not to esteem present things, to think of the future judgment, to remember that Jesus Christ is the true and eternal king; to be merciful, to do justice, and particularly to take care of the poor.

Under Constantius pains was taken to reunite the Donatists to the general church. The consequence was, that a number were formally recovered to it. The body of them remained, what they always were, an unworthy people, and they had among them a sort

of wild licentious persons called circumcelliones, who were very violent and ferocious in their conduct.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EXTENSION OF THE GOSPEL FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CENTURY TO THE DEATH OF CONSTANTIUS.

THIS should be the favourite object of a Christian historian, and glad should I be to answer the most sanguine wishes of the Evangelical reader. But the period before us is far more fruitful in ecclesiastical contentions than remarkable for the extension of Christianity itself; and even the account which we have of the trophies of the Redeemer's death and resurrection in the barbarous countries is too mean and defective, to satisfy the laudable curiosity of those who love the progress of vital religion.

One Meropius a Tyrian philosopher, possessed of the spirit of travelling, explored the interior parts of India about the beginning of the century.^a He took with him two boys his relations, who understood the Greek tongue. Arriving at a certain harbour, the natives murdered the whole company, except the two boys, who were presented to the king, and finding favour in his eyes, were promoted in his court. Upon the king's death, the queen dowager engaged them to superintend the affairs of the realm, and the education of the young prince. Their names were *Ædesius* and *Frumentius*. But the latter was prime minister.^b The man had his eyes, however, on higher objects than the politics of the country. He met with some Roman merchants, who traded there, and asked them if they found any Christians in the kingdom. Having discovered some by their means, he encouraged them to associate for the purposes of religious worship, and at length erected a church for their use, and certain natives instructed in the gospel were converted to the faith. On the king's accession to the administration, *Frumentius* desired leave to return to his own country, which both the king and his mother were very reluctant to allow. He left the country, however, with *Ædesius*. The latter returned to his relations at Tyre, while *Frumentius*, arriving at Alexandria, communicated his adventures to *Athanasius*

^a I follow the narrative of Socrates, B. I. C. XIX. But what he calls India seems to have been the kingdom of Abyssinia, which at this day calls itself Christian, and glories in the evangelical labours of its first bishop *Frumentius*, though it appears, from the account of Bruce in his Voyage to discover the source of the Nile, to have long remained in the deepest ignorance and vice.

^b Bruce would call him, the R.A. The whole story carries a strong air of probability, from the resemblance of the customs in this Indian Kingdom to those of Abyssinia, which seems to confirm the conjecture, that this India of Socrates was Abyssinia.

the bishop, and informed him of the probability of evangelizing the country, if missionaries were sent thither. On mature consideration, Athanasius told him, that none was so fit for the office as himself. He consecrated him therefore the first bishop of the Indians, and the active missionary returning to a country, where his integrity and capacity had already been distinguished, preached the gospel with much success, and erected many churches. Thus was the gospel planted in a barbarous kingdom, where the extreme ignorance of the natives would much facilitate its external progress at least, under the episcopal labours of a man, who had educated their sovereign: then at least, most probably, there were many real conversions, and a time of copious effusion of the Spirit of God.¹ And the difficulty of access to this region, which has since proved so prejudicial to the advancement of knowledge among its inhabitants, was at that time a happy preservative to the infant church. It was in vain, that Constantius laboured to poison it with his beloved Arianism. He gave orders, that Frumentius should be deposed, and that an Asian successor should be appointed; but the country was happily out of the reach of his imperial bigotry.

The Iberians were a people bordering on the Black Sea, who, in some military excursion, took prisoner a pious Christian woman, whose sanctity of manners engaged the respect of these barbarians. Socrates mentions several miracles which God wrought by her means.² The credibility of such divine interpositions much depends on the importance of circumstances. 'Nec Deus invenit, nisi dignus vindice nodus,' is a rule of Hæcæ full of good sense, and as applicable to theology as to poetry. What so likely to affect the minds of an ignorant people as miracles? The situation of things rendered it probable, that such divine interpositions might appear; but I shall mention only those, which may seem worthy of some credit. A child of the king's was sent to the women of the country to be cured if any of them knew a proper method of treating it—a well known ancient custom. The case baffled the skill of them all, and the child was committed to the captive woman. "Christ, said she, who healed many, will also heal this infant." She prayed, and he recovered. In the same manner the queen herself was healed of a distemper some time after. "It is not my work, said she, but that of Christ the Son of God, the maker of the world." The king sent her presents in token of his gratitude. But she

sent them back, assuring him, that "godliness was her riches, and that she should look on it, as the noblest present, if he would worship the God, whom she adored." The next day the king was lost in hunting in a thick mist, and implored in vain the aid of his gods. In his distress recollecting the words of the woman, he prayed to the God, whom she worshipped. The mist was instantly dispersed, and the king found his way home. In consequence of this event, and of future conferences with the woman, both the king and queen embraced the gospel, and exhorted their subjects to receive it. An embassy was sent to Constantine, to desire that pastors might be commissioned to instruct them. The emperor gave the ambassadors a very gracious reception.

It is proper to add here on the authority of Philostorgius, that Constantius sent ambassadors to the Sabæans of Arabia Felix, demanding that the Roman navigators and inhabitants might build Christian churches, and that he furnished them with money for the purpose. Theophilus an Indian, who had long been with Constantine in the capacity of an hostage, was ordained bishop by Eusebius of Nicomedia, and sent among the Sabæans; he erected churches, and spread at least the name of Christianity to a certain degree.

The ecclesiastical accounts of Britain are so fabulous, or at best so scanty, that it is a pleasure to be able to relate any thing that has the marks of historical authenticity. At the council of Ariminum, held on account of the Arian heresy, the emperor Constantius gave orders to supply the expenses of the bishops out of the public treasury. While the rest accepted the imperial munificence, the bishops of Gaul and Britain thought it unbecoming the ecclesiastical character to receive secular maintenance, and bore their own expenses. Only three from Britain were so poor, that they were unable to maintain themselves. Their brethren offered by a contribution to supply their wants; but they chose rather to be obliged to the emperor's bounty, than to burden their brethren. Gavidius a French bishop reproached them for this; but Severus, the relater of the story, thinks it was a circumstance much redounding to their credit.¹ So I apprehend it will appear to the reader, and we regret that where there are such evident vestiges of primitive and disinterested simplicity, we should know so little of the lives and characters of men quite remote from the scenes of ecclesiastical turbulence and ambition. Probably in our island the gospel flourished at this time in humble obscurity.

Christianity was spreading itself beyond the Roman empire. The nations bordering

¹ The absolute despotism of the Abyssinian princes, and the probability that the sovereign before us received Christianity, would account for the establishment of the gospel through the whole country. And the inaccessible situation and profound ignorance of Abyssinia will account for the continuance of nominal Christianity to this day.

² B. L. c. 20.

on the Rhine, with the remotest parts of France, were now Christian; and the Goths near the Danube, about sixty years before, had been civilized at least by the Christian religion through the bishops whom they had carried captive under Gallienus; and most probably the Spirit of God was with their labours. Armenia, under its king Tiridates, had embraced Christianity,^a and by means of commerce had conveyed it into Persia, where Christians began to be numerous.

But there they sustained a very grievous persecution from king Sapor in the time of Constantine; a long account of which we have in Sozomen.^a The reader has seen many things of the same kind in former persecutions; I shall only observe therefore in general, that thousands chose rather to suffer for the name of Christ, than to pollute themselves with the worship of the sun; that the Magi and the Jews were peculiarly instrumental in this persecution, and that the people of God suffered here with so much sincerity and fortitude, as to evince that the Lord had many people belonging to himself in Persia.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DECLINE OF IDOLATRY IN THIS CENTURY TO THE DEATH OF CONSTANTINUS.

It was the character of the ancient Romans to be excessively superstitious. While their arms prospered through Europe and Asia, they were vigilant and punctual in all the offices of their religion, and as studious of adopting the gods of the nations whom they conquered, as their improvements in arts and sciences. This religious spirit was the nurse at least, if not the parent, of many social virtues; industry, frugality, valour, and patriotism coalesced with superstition. With the learning of Greece at length her philosophical scepticism and Epicurean profaneness were incorporated into the Roman commonwealth, and were attended with their usual vices of luxury and dissipation. The vulgar still believed, as senators and equestrians were wont to do; the college of Augurs, the whole apparatus of idolatry, remained in all their pomp and formality; and the greatest noblemen thought themselves dignified by the priesthood, while they inwardly despised what they professed with fictitious reverence. Little did they think that the Christian

religion was destined to overturn the idolatrous establishment of ages, when a few fishermen and mechanics of Judea began to preach Christ crucified. By our present familiarity with Christian usages, and by the perfect annihilation of Pagan phenomena, we are not prepared to admire so much the work of God in the propagation of his own religion, as it deserves. Were the matter fully considered, it would strike every mind with conviction, that the hand of the Lord hath done this. That zeal, which philosophy had cooled, revived in the minds of polytheists, and produced persecution, as Christianity spread through the nations. A superstitious temper in many of the great and the learned succeeded to the sceptical turn of mind, and mere philosophers themselves, through carnal enmity and political selfishness, aided the intolerant spirit with all their might. We have seen how the gospel still triumphed without secular support, and have already taken notice of one strong symptom of the decline of Paganism toward the end of the second century, namely, that a new race of philosophers arose, who attempted to form an alliance with Christianity. These new Platonics all owned Ammonius for their master, who, as Eusebius tells us, professed the gospel to the end of his life. So plainly did Satan feel his inability to crush the gospel, that he was contented now with labouring to adulterate and undermine it. From this school proceeded Porphyry,^a born at Tyre, whose life is written by Eusebius. He studied six years at Rome under Plotinus, whose life he published. Socrates tells us,^b that in his early days he was a Christian; but having been beaten by some Christians at Cæsarea, through disgust he relinquished the gospel. Its hold on his mind must have been extremely weak, when he could be induced to leave it because of the unworthy conduct of some professors. But let Augustine's reflection be heard on this occasion, who thus addresses him: "If ever you had truly and cordially loved divine wisdom, you would have known Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, nor would you ever have revolted from his most wholesome humility, through the pride of vain knowledge." There remain only some fragments of his fifteen books against the Christians. He shews in them the same malignant spirit which Celsus did, but with superior abilities: for his capacity and learning were both very eminent.

In his old age he published a work on the philosophy of oracles, which has been denied to be his, because he speaks in it very honourably of Christianity, and utters sentiments

^a Armenia had probably long before been in some measure evangelized. It was not, however, till the commencement of this century that Gregory, surnamed the enlightener, established the gospel there. Through his means Tiridates and all his nobles were brought over to the profession of Christianity. He was consecrated bishop of Armenia by Leontius bishop of Cappadocia. Mosheim, Cent. IV.

^b B. II. c. 9, &c.

^a See Lardner's Collection, under the article Porphyry. From him I have derived information on this subject, though obliged to dissent entirely from his opinion.

^b B. III. c. 23.

which one would not expect from a man, who had spent a long life in virulent animosity against the followers of Jesus. This enmity is often as strong where it is covered, as when it is open; and circumstances will dictate a great variety in men's ways of shewing or concealing it. During the Dioclesian persecution philosophers were not ashamed to persecute. Hierocles has been mentioned, who as a magistrate tortured the Christians, and as a philosopher wrote against them. If he lived to see Christianity established under Constantine, it is not improbable, provided he wrote at all on the subject, that he wrote as Porphyry does in the work before us. Worldly men are moved by good success to admire, by bad to condemn. Even their opinions are superficially swayed by these external things, and yet the latent frame of their spirits remains the same. Porphyry lived, we are told, to an advanced age, and as his work, styled the *Philosophy of Oracles*, points out the gospel to be then the prevalent religion, it was probably his last production; and Eunapius owns he left sentiments in his last works different from the former. Yet he never seems with Ammonius to have professed Christianity since his early apostasy. But he confesses that the Barbarians were much in the right, and the Greeks in the wrong. He tells us of Apollo's oracular answers concerning Christ, that his soul after death was immortal, that he was pious and holy, though ignorant Christians do wrong to worship him. Augustine thinks, that these oracles were invented on purpose to disparage the Christians, by representing them as being allied with Satan. The oracle, whether carried on by Satanic or human fraud, or what seems nearest the truth, by both, would doubtless have a tendency by this means to asperse Christianity. At the same time to praise Christ and to blame his followers, may be conceived to be the natural language of an enemy of God, lying under some restraint, and it has been the common conduct of infidels in our days, who, had they lived in persecuting times, with Celsus, would have as freely expressed their contempt of Christ as of his people. Christians are, however, represented by Porphyry as corrupt and erroneous, while their master is honoured as divine. From this view of Porphyry one may learn something of the policy of Satan and his emissaries in the support of a dying cause. The decay of Paganism is evident, and the arts of philosophic infidelity were then what they are now. Men who know the value of divine truth should guard against these devices, and not suffer themselves to be seduced by an ambiguous and insidious candour. At the same time the progress of error in proud men is strongly illustrated in the case of Porphyry. Men,

who have no real experience of the power of godliness, are easily induced to give up its form: if they be men of parts and learning, they are led from one delusion to another, till they advance to the farthest limit of malevolence and enmity. Checked they may be by circumstances, and may talk respectfully of Christ to the last; but unless humbled and brought to know themselves, they will live and die the same.

The first measures of Constantine, after his success in Italy, were to place Christianity on an equal footing with Paganism by the laws, while he gradually patronised the church more and more. Among other improvements in the political and judiciary state of the empire, he abolished the barbarous punishment of crucifixion. After he was become sole master of the empire, he forbade the private exercise of divination, the great bulwark of false religion, still allowing the public use of it at the altars and temples; and some time after he prohibited the worst branches of sorcery and magic.⁴ He took particular care to secure the observation of the Lord's day, and ordered it to be set apart for prayer and holy exercises. He publicly declared, that he would not oblige men to be Christians, though he earnestly desired they would; nor did he abolish the rites of the temples. Finding, however, the Pagans extremely obstinate in the preservation of their superstitions, he publicly exposed the mysteries, which had hitherto been kept secret, melted down golden statues, and caused brazen ones to be drawn by ropes through the streets of Constantinople. And some of the temples, which had been scenes of horrible wickedness, he destroyed.

In Egypt the famous cubit, with which the priests were wont to measure the height of the Nile, was kept in the temple of Serapis. This by Constantine's order was removed to the church at Alexandria. The Pagans beheld the removal with indignation, and ventured to predict, that the Nile would no longer overflow its banks. Divine Providence, however, smiled on the schemes of Constantine, and the Nile the next year overflowed the country in an uncommon degree. In this gradual manner was Paganism overturned; sacrifices in a partial manner still continued, but the entire destruction of idolatry seemed to be at hand. The temples stood for the most part, though much defaced, and deprived of their former dignity and importance. The sons of Constantine trod in his steps, and gradually proceeded in the demolition of Paganism. Under them we find an express edict for the abolition of sacrifices.

Magnentius, the usurper, while master of Rome, allowed the Gentiles to celebrate

² Civit. Del. B. XIX.

⁴ Cave's State of Paganism under the first Christian emperors.

their sacrifices in the night: but Constantius immediately after his victory took away this indulgence; and solemnly prohibited magic in all its various forms. He also took away the altar and image of victory, which stood in the portico of the capital. In truth, this emperor was by no means wanting in zeal against idolatry, though his unhappy controversial spirit in defence of Arianism rendered him rather an enemy than a friend to vital godliness.

Such was the state of Paganism at the death of Constantius. Pagans were, however, exceedingly numerous, and enjoyed with silent pleasure the long and shameful scenes of Arian controversy in the church. Nor were they hopeless. The eyes of the votaries of the gods were all directed to his successor, the warlike, the enterprising, the zealous Julian, a determined foe of the gospel. Great things had been done for the church; but its rulers of the house of Constantine were weak and void of true piety. In the warm imaginations of many zealous devotees, even Jupiter himself seemed likely to GROW TERRIBLE AGAIN, AND TO BE AGAIN ADORED. This last struggle of expiring Paganism, marked as it is with signal instances of Providence, will deserve particular attention.

CHAPTER VIII.

JULIAN'S ATTEMPTS TO RESTORE IDOLATRY.

THE world in no age ever saw a greater zeal for Paganism than Julian. Temper, talents, power, and resentment, all conspired to cherish his superstitious attachments. It may serve to illustrate the providential care of God over his church, and by way of contrast it may heighten our ideas of that gospel-simplicity, with which we have seen divine truth to be supported and advanced, to behold the serpentine arts with which the prince of darkness was permitted to attempt the restoration of his kingdom by the hand of Julian. For I can by no means subscribe to the character, which Mosheim* gives us of the mediocrity of his genius. Whoever duly attends to the plan which he formed to subvert Christianity, will see the union of a solid judgment with indefatigable assiduity. Neither address nor dexterity was wanted. All that the wit and prudence of man could do was attempted. He was highly superstitious indeed, and addicted to magic beyond all bounds. Nor are these, as Mosheim thinks, any tokens of natural meanness of spirit. Alexander the Great was as mag-nanimous by nature as any of the sons of men; yet was he as superstitious as Julian

himself. The desire of weighing characters in modern scales is apt to betray men of learning into a false judgment both of persons and things. Let it then fairly be allowed, what indeed his works and actions in general, as well as his artful and judicious opposition to the gospel, evince, that Julian was a man of very great parts and endowments. He died about the same age with Alexander: neither of them had attained that maturity of judgment, which full experience gives to the human mind. And yet the world beheld in them both uncommon exertions of genius and capacity. If Julian failed, let it be remembered, that his arms were levelled against heaven, and it is of no service to Christianity, to depreciate the talents of its enemies.

Constantius ought to have reflected, that by cruelty and injustice in sacrificing the relations of Julian, he excited his hatred against Christianity. The case of Julian deserves commiseration, though it cannot admit of apology. What had he seen excellent or comely in the effects of the gospel on his uncle or cousins? what a prospect did he behold in the face of the Christian church, torn with factions, and deformed by ambition? the same vices under which the heathen world groaned, appeared but too visible at present among Christians. These things, joined with the resentment of family-wrongs, determined him early in life in favour of the old religion. He was made a public reader in the Church of Nicomedia, and affected a zeal for Christianity during the greatest part of the reign of Constantius. Had he read the New Testament with attention, and prayed over it with seriousness, he might have seen that the doctrines there inculcated led to a conduct very opposite to that which he beheld in the then leaders of the Christian world, both civil and ecclesiastical. A tenth part of the study which he employed on the profane classics might have sufficed for this. But, like many infidels in all ages, he does not seem to have paid any attention to the Scriptures, nor even to have known what their doctrines really are. From youth he practised dissimulation with consummate artifice. One Maximus, a noted philosopher and magician, confirmed him in his Pagan views; he secretly held correspondence with Libanius, the Pagan sophist; and openly he attempted to erect a church; he studied all day, and sacrificed at night. He offered up his prayers in the church in public, and at midnight rose to perform his devotions to Mercury. His residence at Athens completed his knowledge of the fashionable philosophy; in fine, no person was ever more admirably qualified to act the part which he did, when he succeeded Constantius.

This happened in the year 361. He ordered the temples to be set open, those that

* Mosh. Eccl. Cent. iv.

were decayed to be repaired, and new ones to be built, where there was a necessity. He fined the persons who had made use of the materials of the temples which had been demolished, and set apart the money this way collected in the erection of new ones. Altars were every where set up, and the whole machinery of Paganism was again brought into use. Altars and fires, blood, perfumes, and priests attending their sacrifices, were every where visible, and the imperial palace itself had its temple and furniture. The first thing he did every morning was to sacrifice, and by his presence and example he encouraged the practice among all his subjects. Heathenism held up its head, and Christians were every where insulted. He repealed the laws made against idolatry, and confirmed its ancient honours and privileges. But laws are the least part of what it behoves princes to do, who mean to encourage religion. A plan of conduct, an earnestness of principle, and a system of manners are needful to support any religious tenets.* The Author, mentioned below, has with great clearness illustrated the methods of Julian. Change the object, and let true religion be promoted, instead of false, and Julian will preach usefully to Christian princes, and shame the criminal indifference to all piety, which clouds the greatest part of the political hemisphere of Europe.

I. Philosophical infidels, in our own times, when they have found themselves no longer able to support a perfect scepticism, have borrowed some Christian light, called it natural, and laboured by the help of that to subvert Christianity itself. We have seen, in part, the same procedure in the Amononian philosophers. In Julian this scheme was reduced to a system; and he issued out precepts for the support of Heathenism, which in his youth he had learned in the Christian school, though he disavows his obligations to his benefactors. The divine excellence of the gospel, and the extreme malignity of human nature do each appear hence in a very conspicuous light. To reform Paganism itself was his first object. To maintain it on the old system of popular belief he saw was impossible. Christian light had now rendered Pagan darkness visible, its deformity disgusting, and its absurdity contemptible. With great importunity did he exhort magistrates to correct the vices of men, and relieve their miseries, assuring them that the gods would reward men for their charitable acts; that it is our duty to do good to all, even to the worst of men, and our bitterest enemies; and that public religion should be

supported by a reverential adoration of the images of the gods, which were to be looked on as symbols of the gods themselves. Priests, he said, should so live, as to be copies of what they preached by their own lives, and dissolute ones should be expelled from their offices. Not only wicked actions, but obscene and indecent language should be avoided by them. No idle books and wanton plays, but divine philosophy should be the object of their serious study; they should learn sacred hymns by heart, should pray thrice or at least twice every day; and when in their turn called on to attend the temple, they should never depart from it, and give up themselves to their office. At other times they should not frequent the forum, nor approach the houses of the great, unless with a view of procuring relief for the indigent, or to discharge some part of their office; that in no case they should frequent the theatres, nor ever be seen in the company of a charioteer, player, or dancer. In every city the most pious and virtuous should be ordained, without any consideration of their circumstances. The godly training of their own families, and their compassionate care for the indigent, would be their best recommendation. The impious Galileans, he observed, by their singular benevolence had strengthened their party, and Heathenism had suffered by the want of attention to these things.

Such was the fire which the apostate stole from heaven, and such his artifice in managing it! The rules, however, deserve the attention of Christian pastors in all ages, though it may seem wonderful that the Roman high priest[†] should not see the divinity of that religion whence he had learned such excellent things, the like to which are not in any degree to be found in Plato or any other of his favourite Greeks. He endeavoured in imitation of Christians also to erect schools for the education of youth. Lectures of religion, stated times of prayers, monasteries for devout persons, hospitals and alms-houses for the poor and diseased and for strangers; these things he particularly recommends in a letter to Arsacius the chief priest of Galacia. He tells him what it was that advanced the impious religion of the Christians, their kindness to strangers, their care in burying the dead, and their affected gravity. He bids him warn the priests to avoid play-houses and taverns, and sordid employments. Hospitals should be erected in every city for the reception of all sorts of indigent persons. The Galileans, he observes, relieve both their own poor and ours.[‡]

* Cowe's State of Paganism under Julian. This writer has given so clear and masterly a view in eight particulars of Julian's attempts, that I cannot do better than to tread in his steps. I shall avail myself, however, of other helps, still further to illustrate the subject, particularly Julian's own writings.

† All the Caesars were entitled Pontifex Maximus.

‡ In the same spirit, speaking of the duties of a priest, he observes, "that the gods have given us great hopes after death, and on them we may with confidence rely." He certainly learnt this language from Christianity, which he ungratefully laboured to destroy. A species of behaviour not uncommon with philosophical infidels.

It was not, however, in Julian's power to infuse that spirit into his partizans, which alone could produce such excellent fruits. It is in vain to think of destroying Christian principles, and at the same time of preserving Christian practice. But here is an additional testimony to the virtues of Christians from their most determined enemy, and as powerful an illustration of the work of God in the first ages of Christianity. It must be confessed, at the same time, that the good sense and penetration of the emperor, are as conspicuous as his malice and impiety.

II. Ridicule was the next weapon which the apostate made use of against Christianity. It is a method of attack which in all ages has been but too successful: Satire, as it is the easiest, so is it the most pleasing mode of writing: the whole nature of man, prone to indulge ideas of evil, favours the practice, and when written by an emperor, who might, if he had pleased, have used violence of the most formidable kind, it seemed to be the dictate of generosity. He trod in the steps of Celsus and Porphyry in writing against Christianity, and by the few fragments of his work which remain, appears to have imbibed their spirit. The son of Mary, or the Galilean, were the titles which he gave to the blessed Jesus, and he ordered Christians to be called Galileans.

In his treatise of the Cæsars, he asperses his uncle the great Constantine with much severity, and represents the gospel as an asylum for the vilest of mankind. No doubt the enemies of God were delighted in that age with such productions, as they have since been with similar ones of Hume and Voltaire: and many are slow to learn, that a serious frame of mind is absolutely necessary for the contemplation of Christianity, and is as favourable for its reception, as a playful spirit is for its exclusion from the mind of man.

III. He was extremely politic in weakening the power and interest of Christians. He made an act of sacrifice, the condition of preserving their places of honour and authority, and thus he either lessened their power or their reputation, and while he carefully avoided a formal persecution, he indirectly persecuted under every plausible pretence he could invent. Whoever had distinguished himself under the former reigns in demolishing the monuments of idolatry, felt his heavy hand, and was even put to death on frivolous accusations. The grants made to some subjects from the revenues of heathen temples, furnished a decent opportunity of impoverishing the opulent Christians, and this often with extreme injustice. He seized the treasures of the Arian church at Edessa, which had assaulted the Valentinian heretics, taunting them with the law of

their religion, that being made poor here, they might be rich hereafter. Injuries were now committed with impunity against the Christians by the governors of provinces, and when the former complained, he had the baseness to turn the knowledge of Christian precepts which he had imbibed in his tender years into a cruel sarcasm. "You know what directions of passiveness under injuries your Christ has given you!" To this he added an affected encouragement of heretics and sectaries, and thus artfully embroiled the Christian world with factions by toleration of them all, and real want of affection for any.

IV. It was, however, a refinement of policy far beyond the maxims of that age, and a proof of the native sagacity and good sense of Julian, that young and impetuous as he was he could abstain from open persecution himself, and yet connive at it in others, who knew what was agreeable to their master. He boasted of his mildness in this respect, and contrasted himself with Galerius and the rest of the persecutors, observing that they had augmented, rather than lessened the number of Christians. For, give them only occasion, said he, and they will crowd as fast to martyrdom, as bees fly to their hives. Yet a number suffered for the gospel under his reign, though not by the forms of avowed persecution.

V. The bishops and inferior clergy were beheld with an eye of rancour, at once ingenuous and determined. In truth, they are in all ages the object of peculiar malevolence to men who love darkness rather than light. Persecuting emperors and Atheistical philosophers unite in this respect. It is the glory of the Christian religion, that it provides popular instruction for the bulk of mankind, where not applause, but spiritual utility, not ostentation, but holy and virtuous principles and practice, are the object of attention. Persecutors desire, that no instruction be instilled into the minds of the people, and philosophers, overlooking the vulgar with proud disdain, confine their attention to a few learned men. If the gospel be indeed the light of heaven, that alone leads men to a holiness, which fallen nature abhors, one sees at once, why the public teachers of Christianity are abhorred by the proud and the mighty. Julian charged them with seditiousness; had he been a citizen of a free state, he would with equal falsehood and with equal malice have charged them with supporting tyranny. To deprive the church of the inspection of its pastors, he seized their incomes, abrogated their immunities, exposed them to civil burdens and offices, and occasionally expelled them by fraud or violence. At Antioch the treasures of the church were seized, the clergy obliged to flee, and the

churches shut up.* The same was done at Cyzicus, without any shadow of sedition. At Bostra he threatened Titus the bishop, that if any mutiny happened, he should lay the blame on him and his clergy; and when the bishop assured him, that though the inhabitants were chiefly Christian, they lived peaceably and quietly under his government, he wrote back to the city, charging him with calumniating their character, and exhorting them to expel him. In other places he found pretences for imprisoning and torturing the pastors.

VI. The vigilant malice of the apostate surveyed every advantage, and seized it with consummate dexterity. Nor can the enemies of the gospel in any age find a school more fruitful in the lessons of persecution than this before us. A man so perfectly Grecian, as this emperor, must have hated or despised the Jews, and Moses must have been as really an object of his derision, as St. Paul. But to advance and encourage the Jews in their secular concerns, was one obvious means of depreciating Christianity. Hence he spake of them with compassion, begged their prayers for his success in the Persian wars, and pressed them to rebuild their temple, and restore their worship. He himself promised to defray the expence out of the exchequer, and appointed an officer to superintend the work. To strengthen the hands of such determined enemies of Christianity, and to invalidate the Christian prophecies concerning the desolation of the Jews,[†] were objects highly desirable indeed to the mind of Julian. But the enterprise was suddenly baffled, and the workmen were obliged to desist. No historical fact since the days of the apostles seems better attested. I shall very briefly throw into a note the fact itself and its proofs, and then

leave the reader to judge, whether there was ever any reason to doubt its credibility.[‡]

VII. The suppression of learning among the Christians was another of the objects of Julian's policy. He published a law, that no professor of any art or science should practice in any place without the approbation of the court of that city, and the sanction of the emperor. With a view to keep the church in ignorance of the arts of reasoning and philosophy, he forbade Christian school-masters to teach Gentile learning, lest being furnished, says he, with our armour, they make war upon us with our own weapons. Our learning is unnecessary to Christians, who are trained up to an illiterate rusticity, so that to believe is sufficient for them; and by this prohibition I only restore possessions to their proper owners.[§] The scheme was highly prudent, but it required a great length of time, to raise from it any considerable effects.

VIII. Philosophy had ever been the determined foe of the gospel. It behoved the artful persecutor, himself a philosopher, to encourage it as much as possible. He expressed his hearty wishes, that all the books of the wicked Galileans, were banished out of the world. But as this was now impossible, he directed the philosophers to bend all their powers against them. Jamblicus, Libanius, Maximus, and others of the philosophic tribe, were his intimate friends and

† Ammianus Marcellinus, a writer of unquestionable credibility, and at least no friend of the gospel, acquaints us with the attempt, and informs us of its defeat. "He projected to rebuild the magnificent temple of Jerusalem. He committed the conduct of the affair to Alypius of Antioch; who set himself to the vigorous execution of his charge, and was assisted by the governor of the province; but horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations with repeated attacks, rendered the place inaccessible to the scorched workmen from time to time, and the element resolutely driving them to a distance, the enterprise was dropped." Socrates observes, that during the progress of this affair the Jews menaced the Christians, and threatened to retort upon them the evils which they had suffered from the Romans. The Christian evidences for the fact are Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, and Chrysostom, who lived at the same time. The three ecclesiastical historians, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, who lived in the next age, do all give a testimony consistent one with another. To these may be added Philostorgius, the Arian, and the testimony of Jewish Rabbis. See Warburton's Julian, p. 98.

‡ In the same strain he says, "If they (the Christian professors) think these authors give a false account of the most honourable beings, let them bestake themselves to the churches of the Galileans, and expound Matthew and Luke. Yet those of the (Christian) youth who please to go (to the Pagan schools) are not excluded. So prudently did he provide for the progress of Hellenism and for the downfall of Christian knowledge. He charges the Christians with the inconsistency of instructing pupils in classical learning, at the same time that they opposed the heathen mythology. The account of La Bletiere concerning this matter is just, and his observation deserves to be quoted. "To explain the classic authors, to commend them as models of language, of eloquence and taste, to unveil their beauties, &c. this is not propounding them as oracles of religion and morality." Julian is pleased to confound two things so different, and to erect, under favour of this confusion, the puerile sophistry, which prevails through his whole edict.

• Ammianus, B XXIII. c. 1.

* It is certain, that the temple of Daphne was burned in the night which terminated the procession of the Christians, who had removed the body of Babylas, a martyr in the Decian persecution, to Antioch from Daphne, where Julian would not suffer it to remain any longer. Julian, in his satire against the people of Antioch, indirectly charged the Christians with the fact, and was glad of the pretence to justify his severities against them. That he suspected them Ammianus assures us, but gives no ground to justify the suspicion. The work, entitled Misopogon, rallies the manners of the Antiochians. Those of the emperor were austere, and void not only of pomp, but even of decent neatness. Theirs were full of Asiatic luxury, and Christian simplicity had much decayed in this place, where Christians first had the name. Their numbers were immense, but the power of godliness was low.

† He sent for some of the chief men of their nation, and asked them why they did not sacrifice according to the law of Moses. They told him, that they were forbidden to sacrifice except at Jerusalem. He thereupon promises to rebuild their temple, and we have still a letter of his to the community of the Jews, which appears, on the authority of Sozomen, to be genuine. Philostorgius expressly tells us, that Julian's design in the rebuilding of Jerusalem was to oppose the prophecies of Sozomen. Lardner.

‡ See Matth. xxiii. 38, 39. To restore this people, while yet they continued in their enmity to Christ, was an attempt worthy of an infidel like Julian, and called for a miraculous interposition as plainly as Pharaoh's pursuit of the Israelites at the Red sea.

counsellors, and the empire was filled with invectives against the gospel. Its enemies were liberally paid by imperial munificence for their labours, and Julian seemed desirous to put it to the proof, whether indeed "the foolishness of God was wiser than men."

IX. He used ensnaring artifices to draw unwary Christians into compliance with pagan superstitions. He was wont to place the images of the heathen gods near his own statues, that those who bowed to the latter, might seem to adore also the former. Those who seemed thus to comply, he endeavoured to persuade into greater compliances; those who refused, he charged with treason, and proceeded against them as delinquents. He ordered the soldiers, when they received their donative, to throw a piece of frankincense into the fire in honour of the gods. Some few Christians, who had been surprised into the practice, returned to the emperor, threw back their donatives, and professed their readiness to die for their religion.* At other times he would defile the fountains with Gentile sacrifices, and sprinkle the food brought to market with hallowed water. Christians knew their privilege from St. Paul's well-known determination of the case, yet they groaned under the indignity. Juvenius, and Maximus, two officers of his guard, expostulated with great warmth against these proceedings, and so provoked his resentment, that he punished them capitally, though, with that caution which never forsook him, he declared, that he put them to death not as Christians, but as unprofitable subjects.

Jupiter had in no age possessed so zealous a devotee as this prince, who lived at the close of his religious dominion over mankind. The Decius's and the Galerius's compared with Julian, were mere savages. It is cer-

tain that no ingenuity could have contrived measures more dextrously. Disgrace, poverty, contempt, a moderate degree of severity checked and disciplined by dissimulation, and every method of undermining the human spirit, were incessantly labouring to subvert Christianity. One sees not how the scheme could have failed, had Providence permitted this prudent and active genius to have proceeded many years in this course; but what a worm is man, when he sets himself to oppose his Maker!

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHURCH UNDER JULIAN.

AFTER having taken a view of various circumstances all tending to illustrate the state of Christendom, it is time to return to the order of our history from the death of Constantius. The people of God, with light very faint, were in a low state, torn within by the Arian controversy, and scandalized by the madness of the Donatists. The faithfuls and pastors of the church were by no means simple and intelligent in divine things, and were menaced even with destruction by a persecution conducted with as much malice and vigour, and far greater dexterity, than any of the foregoing. The Christian bishops, however, took advantage of Julian's affected moderation to return to their sees. Meletius came back to Antioch; Lucifer of Cagliari and Eusebius of Vercellæ returned to their churches; but Athanasius remained still in the desert, because of the power of George at Alexandria. Julian wrote a letter to Photinus the heretic, and commended his zeal against the Divinity of Jesus Christ.^b He ordered Eusebius of Cyzicus, under severe penalties, to rebuild the church of the Novatians, which he had destroyed in the time of Constantius; a punishment probably just, though, like every thing else done by Julian concerning the Christian religion, contrived by him with malignant intentions. He protected the Donatists in Africa, and defended them against the general church and against one another.

The prohibition of human learning decreed by this emperor induced Apollinarius, the father and the son, to invent something which might stand as a substitute for the loss. The father, a grammarian, wrote in heroics the sacred history, and imitated the Greek tragedians, taking his subjects out of the Scripture. The son, a philosopher, wrote in defence of the gospel in the form of dialogues like Plato. Little of these works has come down to us; the prohibition ceasing with the death of Julian, Christian

* The story from Theodoret, B. III. c. 17. deserves to be told more particularly. Julian caused an altar to be placed near himself with burning coals and incense upon a table, and required every one to throw some incense into the fire, before he received his gold. Some, who were aware of the danger, feigned sickness; some through fear or avarice complied. But the greater part were deceived. Some of these last going afterwards to their meals, called on the name of Jesus Christ, according to their custom. One of their companions said in a surprise: "what is the meaning of this? you call on Christ after having renounced him." How? answered the other astonished. "You have thrown incense into the fire. They instantly tore their hair, rose up from table, and ran into the forum." We declare it, they cried, before all the world, we are Christians; we declare it before God, to whom we live, and for whom we are ready to die. We have not betrayed thee, Jesus our Saviour. "If our hands have offended, our hearts consented not. The emperor has deceived us, we renounce the empty, and our blood shall answer for it." They then ran to the palace, and throwing the gold at Julian's feet, "sacrifice us, say they, to Jesus Christ, and give your gold to those who will be glad to receive it." In a rage he ordered them to be led to execution. The warmth of his temper had well nigh prevailed over his politic maxims; he recovered himself, however, in time sufficient to countermand the order. He contented himself with banishing them to the distant parts of the empire, forbidding them to reside in cities. Let the reader see here the philosophizing heathen and the simple Christian in contrast, and judge which religion is human and which is divine.

^b Fleury, XV. 4.

scholars returned to their former studies, and we cannot judge how far the writings of the Apollinarii merited the rank of Classics. Eusebius, a famous sophist at Constantinople, yielded to the caresses of Julian, and returned to paganism. After the emperor's death he desired to be received again into the church, and prostrating himself at the door of the church, said, "Tread me under foot like salt that hath lost its savour." I know no more of the man to enable me to form a just estimate of his character. We may be convinced, however, that a considerable number of true Christians were yet in the church amidst all its corruptions, by this important fact, that the greatest part of public teachers and professors of Christianity chose to quit their chairs, rather than to forsake their religion. Proeresius ought to be distinguished. Julian had studied under him at Athens, and, from a kindness to his master, excepted him out of the general law. Yet he refused to be thus singled out from his brethren, and retired. Another of them was Victorinus an African, converted from idolatry in his old age. The manner of his conversion is finely told by Augustine, and I shall have occasion to give it to the reader hereafter. His Rhetorical school was given up on occasion of Julian's edict, and he wrote with zeal in defence of Divine truth, though his abilities were inadequate to the work, because he applied himself to the study of Scripture too late in life.

Cæsarius, the brother of the famous Gregory Nazianzen, continued to practise physic at court, as he had done in the former reign. His brother wrote to him, how grievous a thing it was to himself and to their aged father (the bishop of Nazianzum in Cappadocia) that he should continue in the court of an infidel, seeking worldly greatness. "Our mother, says he, could not endure the account. Such the weakness of her sex, and such the fervour of her piety, we are obliged to conceal the truth from her." Cæsarius profited by these rebukes; not all the artifices of Julian could move him. "I am a Christian, says he, and must continue so." Cæsarius quitted the court, and retired to his pious father, who was as much delighted with his new conduct, as earthly-minded parents would have been displeased.

Among the officers of the army was Valentinian, afterwards emperor. He commanded the guards who attended Julian. The emperor one day entered into the temple of fortune, and on each side of the gate stood the door-keepers, who sprinkled with scented water those who came in. A drop of this water falling on Valentinian's mantle, he struck the officer with his fist, expressed his resentment at his being defiled with the impure water, and tore that part of his mantle.

• Sozomen. VI. c. 6.

Julian, incensed at his boldness, banished him from his presence, not for his Christianity, as he pretended, but, because he had not kept his cohort in good order. Sensible, however, of his merit, he still employed him in the army. There were others who like Valentinian defended their Christian profession not with meekness, but wrath. They found, however, the punishment of their folly from Julian, whose partiality and prejudices in favour of paganism urged him to adopt measures, which filled the whole empire with confusion.

At Marum, a city of Phrygia, Amachius the governor of the province ordered the temples to be opened, and the idols to be cleansed. Three Christians, inflamed, says my author,⁴ with Christian zeal, could not bear the indignity. Burning, continues he, with an incredible love of virtue, they rushed by night into the temple, and broke all the images. The governor, in his wrath, being about to chastize many innocent persons, the culprits very generously offered themselves to punishment. He gave them the alternative, to sacrifice or to die. They preferred the latter, and suffered death with excruciating tortures; more admirable for fortitude than meekness in their behaviour during their dying scenes.

At Pessinus in Galatia, on the confines of Phrygia, two young men suffered death in the presence of Julian. I wish I could say it was for professing the faith of Christ. But one of them had overturned an idol. The emperor put him to death in a cruel manner with his companion, their mother, and the bishop of the city.

At Ancyra, the capital of Galatia, there was a priest, named Basil, who in the former reign had opposed Arianism, and now with equal sincerity resisted idolatry. He went through the city, publicly exhorting the people to avoid polluting themselves with sacrifices. Once observing the Gentiles employed in their religious rites, he sighed, and besought God, that no Christian might be guilty of such enormity. The governor upon this apprehended him, charging him with sedition, and having tortured him, kept him in prison. Julian himself coming

⁴ Socrates, B. III. c. 15. I fear there was in this action more of pride than zeal. Christians having tasted a little of the pleasures of superiority over Pagans in the two last reigns, and being influenced in no high degree by Christian principles in these times, descended again into a state of disgrace and inferiority with much reluctance. In the same spirit at Dorostora in Thrace, one Amilian was cast into the fire by the soldiers for having overthrown certain altars. Those only who are in the vigorous exercise of spiritual arms, can with cheerful patience abstain from such as are carnal under provocation. Yet true Christians might be in a degree overcoming in the heart, and suffer with the love of Christ prevailing in the heart. The intelligent reader will take notice, however, from the commendations bestowed on such conduct by Socrates, how much the spirit of Christianity had declined since the days of Cyprian.

• Sozomen, B. V. 11.

to Ancyra, sent for Basil, who reproached him with his apostacy. Julian said, he had intended to dismiss him, but was obliged to treat him severely on account of his impudence. And in the end this priest suffered death in torture. Busiris was an heretic of the sect of the Abstemious, and was tortured at the same place. His constancy was amazing to the beholders; but he outlived Julian, recovered his liberty, and afterwards quitting his heresy, returned to the general church.

Cæsarea in Cappadocia, being almost entirely Christian, having destroyed the temple of fortune, since Julian's accession, merited his peculiar hatred; and he oppressed it with heavy exactions. Julian arriving at Antioch was mortified to find how low the Pagan interest was fallen there. The feast of Apollo was annually celebrated at Daphne, and on that occasion he expected to see the religious magnificence of Antioch displayed before himself as high priest. "What sacrifice," said he to the priest, "is to be offered at the festival?" "I have brought a goose from home," replied he, "but the city has prepared nothing." "You, all of you," addressing himself to the senate,¹ "suffer every thing to be carried out of your houses, and given to the Galileans by your wives, who support the poor with your wealth, and give credit to their impiety." He uttered more to the same purpose, but he could not communicate his zeal to the senate or people of Antioch. The rage for Hellenism had ceased for ever.

Mark, the bishop of Arethusa in Syria, being ordered to pay the expense of rebuilding an idolatrous temple, which he had destroyed in the time of Constantius, and refusing from conscientious motives, was tortured in an uncommon manner, and bore his sufferings with such astonishing patience, that the præfect said to Julian, "Is it not a shame, sir, that the Christians should be so much superior to us, and that an old man, over whom victory itself would be inglorious, should conquer us?" He was at length dismissed, and a number, who had persecuted him, attended afterwards to his instructions. The bishop had saved the life of Julian in the beginning of the reign of Constantius, when all his family was in danger! His character appears to have been that of eminent piety and virtue; as such he is extolled by Gregory Nazianzon, though he had all along taken part with the Arian party: and considering the entire separation of the Arian from the general church, it is very improbable that Gregory should speak of him so highly as he does, had he not returned to the church, and been in its communion at that time.² It would be tedious to recite all the accounts of those who suffered from the

insolent cruelty of Pagans under the politic connivance and partiality of Julian during his short reign.

In the year 362, George³ of Alexandria was murdered by the Pagans of that city, to whom he had made himself obnoxious, by exposing their senseless and ridiculous rites. The providence of God was wonderfully displayed in causing this man, who had distinguished himself as the persecutor of his people, to perish by the hands of idolaters at last. There were not wanting, however, those who gave it out, that he had been murdered by the Athanasian party.⁴ The letter of Julian to the people of Alexandria, still extant, abundantly confutes this calumny. He blames none but those of his own religion for it, and in his manner of blaming them, he confesses that George deserved even severer punishments, and declares that he will inflict no higher penalty on them than a reprimand, which he hopes they will reverence, "because from their first origin they were Greeks." Such the partiality of Julian for Gentiles!

The reader will not have forgotten, that Athanasius was all this time in concealment. He had spent seven years, partly in the deserts, and partly in the house of a virgin at Alexandria. And the steady affection which the people had for him, and which no persecution of enemies could conquer, had under God preserved him from his enemies. This year, after the death of George, he ventured to return openly to his bishopric. The Arians were obliged to hold their meetings in private houses, and the general voice of the people every where sincerely decided for Athanasius. During the little time that he was allowed to appear in public, he acted as a Christian bishop, treating his enemies with mildness, and relieving the distressed without respect of persons, restoring the custom of preaching on the doctrine of the Trinity, removing from the sanctuary those who had made a traffic of holy things, and gaining the hearts of the people. He held a council at Alexandria, composed of those who had particularly suffered during the Arian persecution, among whom Eusebius of Vercellæ was particularly distinguished. Here those, who, contrary to their settled principles, had been beguiled by Arian subtleties to subscribe what they did not believe, with tears owned how they had been imposed on, and were received into the church. Here the doctrine of the Trinity was again cleared of the ambiguities which had clouded it, and the Nicene creed was allowed to be the most accurate and exact. Two⁵ schisms unhappily rent the church at this time. The first

¹ This is he whom monkish ignorance had exalted into St. George, the Champion of England, against all the rules of history, geography, and common sense.

² Socrates, B. III. c. 3.

³ Socrates, B. III. c. 9. Fleury, B. XV. 29.

⁴ Misopogon.

⁵ Theodoret, B. III. c. 7. Fleury, B. XV. c. 17.

was at Antioch, where Euzoius the Arian had the chief sway. The followers of Eustathius, the late orthodox bishop, gave themselves up to Paulinus a presbyter, while another party looked on themselves as belonging to Meletius, who had lately returned from exile. Lucifer of Cagliari in his return through the East from banishment in Egypt, stopped at Antioch, with the best intentions, and endeavoured to heal the divisions of the church. But by ordaining Paulinus he confirmed the evils which he meant to cure. Meletius had a church without the city. Paulinus was allowed one within the city, while Euzoius, the most popular, possessed himself of the rest of the churches; but justice requires us to say, that he used his victory with moderation; and respecting the age, meekness, and piety of Paulinus, he did not deprive him of his little church in the city. A rare instance of moderation in an Arian leader. Lucifer himself was offended, that his fellow-sufferer Eusebius would not approve of his conduct at Antioch, and even broke off communion with him. Finding his obstinacy much blamed in the church, he became a schismatic altogether, returned to his own church at Cagliari in Sardinia, where he died eight years after. His followers were called Luciferians, but they were few in number.¹

It is the design of history to record what may be useful to mankind. Even the faults of the wise and good are serviceable in this view. The unhappy spirit of faction, in the decline of Christian faith and love, split the small remnant of the faithful in Antioch into two parties, which subsisted sometime after the beginning of the next century. Two persons, both of undoubted piety, minister there, and yet cannot heal the evil. A third, who had distinguished himself for zeal and piety above many of his age, endeavours to compose

the breach, but widens it. He himself soon after through the impatience of contradiction makes another party. There was a world of wisdom in St. John's charge to the church in his old age, "Little children, love one another." The want of it is sure to be succeeded by factions, surmises, and endless divisions. The breach once made is more easily widened than closed. While the gospel flourished in name through Antioch, the vices of luxury prevailed amidst the evils of heresy and schism. The church there became the mark of reproach to the apostate in his satire against their city. I turn with more pleasure to behold Eusebius of Vercellæ, who came back to his western bishopric in Italy, where he was received with extraordinary joy. His labours, and those of Hilary of Poitiers, were serviceable in Italy, Gaul, and in general through Europe. There the Arian heresy was suppressed, and peace and unity reigned. False learning and philosophy had not so corrupted the understanding. The Donatists in Africa, obtained leave of Julian to recover their churches, and that frantic and turbulent sect proceeded to exercise military violence, an evil with which they had always been infected.

Nor was Athanasius allowed to enjoy long the sweets of liberty. The gentle Alexandrians represented to the emperor, that he corrupted the city and all Egypt, and that if he continued there, not a Pagan would be left. Julian's affected moderation was tried to the utmost in this case, and the open spirit of persecution which, contrary to his deliberate maxims he displayed on this occasion, does immortal honour to the talents and the integrity of the Egyptian prelate. "I allowed those Galileans, says he, who had been banished, to return to their countries, not to their churches." I order Athanasius to leave the city on the receipt of my letter." The Christians wrote to the emperor, and begged that he might not be taken from them. Provoked to see how deeply the love of Christianity was fixed in them, and what progress the bishop had made in a very little time, Julian answered them, "that since Alexander was their founder, and Serapis and Isis their tutelary gods, it was surprising that the corrupted part should dare to call themselves the community. "I am ashamed, says he, that the gods should suffer any of you Alexandrians to confess himself a Galilean. You forget your ancient felicity, when Egypt conversed with the gods, and you abounded with prosperity. Your Alexander was a servant of the gods, whom Jupiter raised far above any of these, or the Hebrews, who were much better. The Ptolemies, who

¹ No man ever exceeded Lucifer in courage and hardness of spirit. When in exile for the Nicene faith, he published certain writings, in which he accuses Constantine with the most astonishing boldness. If there were men of the weakness of the gospel in these writings it might be proper to quote some parts of them for the edification of the Christian reader; but there is evidence in too much of the man, and too little of the saint in the whole method and spirit of them. Not content with composing these works, he sent a copy of them to the emperor, who, surprised at his boldness, ordered him to be asked, "Whether he had really sent them." "Know, answered the intrepid bishop, that I did send the book to the emperor, and after having again considered it, I do not retract, and when you have examined the reasons for which I have written in this manner, you will find that we have been strengthened by God, even in respect with gladness the death which is preparing for us." I wonder not that Athanasius highly commended this man; he himself, though in a less degree, partook of the same spirit. It is useful to mark the tenderness of the Christian spirit among good men. The want of a closer attention to the vitals of experimental piety rendered even the best men in these days too sanguine in their opposition to Heretics. Lucifer was consistent throughout; the same temper which appears to have actuated him in his conduct towards Constantine, induced him into a blameable schism in his latter days; yet who can deny the sincerity of his love for the truth, and the integrity of his heart?

² Jul. Epist. 28. A distinction certainly unfounded, because contrary to the permission granted to all the rest of the bishops.

³ Epist. 51.

cherished your city as a daughter, advanced it to its greatness not by preaching Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the execrable Galileans. If you resolve to follow these impostors, agree among yourselves, and desire not to retain Athanasius. Many of his disciples are capable of pleasing you by their impious discourses. But if your affection for him is grounded on his skill and shrewdness (for I hear the man is crafty,) for this reason I expel him from your city. That such an intriguer should preside over the people is dangerous; one who deserves not the name of man, a low despicable creature, who takes a pride in hazarding his life, and is fit only to cause disturbances in society." To hasten the execution of his order, Julian wrote to the governor of Egypt,^o that if he did not expel Athanasius by a time which he limited, he would fine his officers one hundred pounds of gold. "I am deeply afflicted, says he, at the contempt of the gods, which is shewn by this man; it will be highly agreeable to me if you drive the villain out of Egypt, who under my government has had the insolence to baptize Græcian women of quality."

Athanasius was therefore obliged once more to seek safety by flight. All the faithful gathered round him weeping. "We must retire a little time, friends, says he; it is a cloud that will soon fly over." He took leave of them, recommending his church to the ablest of his friends, and going on board a vessel, he fled by the Nile into the obscurer parts of Egypt. Still his life was in imminent danger. The persecutors followed, and were not far from him, which induced Athanasius to use something of that craftiness with which Julian charged him.[†] He directed his companions to return to Alexandria, and to meet his enemies. The pursuers asked them earnestly, "Have you seen Athanasius?" "He is near, say they, make

• Epist. 6.

^p The enmity of the carnal mind against God has seldom been more displayed than in these letters concerning Athanasius. It breaks through all disguises, and transgresses all the bounds of prudence and decorum. The affectation also of despising a man whom he feared, and whose abilities dismayed him, is completely evident. One sees in the weakness of his arguments, how incapable even sensible men are of saying any thing that has the least tendency to shake the mind of a Christian. We must take every opportunity to shew the progress of the gospel, and as through the scantiness of materials, a part of our evidence must come from the mouth of enemies, it should be observed, that there is in the last letter a confession of the laborious and useful life of Athanasius. He stayed not a year in his bishopric since his return; yet in that time he confirmed the faithful in the truth, he demonstrated the power of godliness by kindness, liberality, and mercy to enemies as well as friends; he extended the pale of the church by the conversion of Pagans, some of noble birth; and he merited the indignation, and alarmed the fears of the monarch of the Roman world. Such is the grace of God operating by Christian principles!

The original is *ἡ μὲν ἀντιοχία, ἀλλὰ ἀντιοχίαντες ὡς ἡμεῖς*. It is not easy to translate into English the malignant spirit of the original.

[†] Sozomen, l. v. c. 15. Socrates, B. III. c. 14.

haste and you will soon overtake him?" Thus deluded, they went forward with speed in vain; and the bishop, who had secreted himself during this scene, returned in private to Alexandria, where he lay concealed till the end of the persecution. Thus did the malice of Julian expose this great and good man, to use the same sort of artifices, which David did, when persecuted by king Saul, who made the same remark as Julian did, "It is told me that he dealeth very subtilly;" a conduct which probably extorted from him afterwards that prayer, "Remove from me the way of lying."

The active spirit of Julian was now bent on the destruction of the Persian monarchy; and the pains and expense which he made use of in sacrifices and auguries may seem incredible. But his ardent mind was one of the fittest instruments of Satanic infatuation, and Divine Providence was hastening his end. At Antioch he was so provoked by the Psalmody of the Christians, particularly the chorus which they used, "Confounded be all they that worship graven images," that he ordered his Prætorian prefect, Sallust, to punish them. He, though a Gentile, reluctantly obeyed, and seized a number of Christians. One of them, Theodorus, a young man, was so long and so variously tortured, that his life was despaired of. But God preserved him a long time after. Rufinus, the Latin ecclesiastical historian,[†] declares, that he saw him a long time after, and asked him, whether he felt any pain in his torments. He owned not much; for a young man stood by him, wiped off his sweat, and encouraged his spirit, so that upon the whole he felt during his tortures more pleasure than pain. A memorable instance of the gracious care of God over his servants! Julian seems to have increased in cruelty, as he came nearer his end: He persecuted numbers at Antioch. Gregory Nazianzen in an oration describes these facts rather in a rhetorical than in an accurate manner, and speaks also of his horrible incantations, and the cruelties attendant on his superstition. The description is probably exaggerated; but Gregory was both too intelligent and too honest either to have been deceived himself, or to have deceived others altogether. Certain it is, that Julian toward the Christian part of his subjects was a tyrant; and one instance more shall close the account of his severities. Publia, a widow of great reputation, with a number of virgins over whom she presided at Antioch, sung and praised God, when Julian was passing by. In particular, they sang such parts of the Psalms as expose the wickedness and folly of idolatry. Julian ordered them to hold their peace,

• 1 Samuel, xxiii, 22.

† Socrates, B. III. c. 19. Rut. B. L. c. 36.

still he had passed them. Publica, with more zeal than charity I fear, encouraged them, and caused them to sing on another occasion as he passed, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered."^u Julian in a rage ordered her to be brought before him, and to be buffeted on each side of her face. The effects of passion seem but too visible in both in the emperor and the woman; there is, however, this difference; the one had a zeal for God, the other a contempt.

I studiously avoid secular history as much as possible, and having no business with Julian's war against the Persians,^v I have only to take notice of the circumstances of his death, and to make a reflection or two on the conduct of Divine Providence, on the character of the man, and on the lessons of piety which are obviously imprinted on his story, and on the great deliverance vouchsafed to the church. He received a mortal wound from a Persian lance in a skirmish. We are told, that conscious of his approaching end, he filled his hand with the blood, and casting it into the air, said, "O GALLILEAN, THOU HAST CONQUERED."^w Some think that by that action he meant to reproach the sun, the idol of the Persians for his partiality to them, though he himself had been his devout worshipper. It is highly probable, that a soul so active and vehement as his, did express his indignation in some remarkable way at that juncture: neither of the accounts are improbable, though both cannot be true. In his last moments in his tent he expressed a readiness to die, declaring that he had learned from philosophy, how much more excellent the soul was than the body, and that death ought rather to be the subject of joy than of affliction. He boasted, that he had lived without guilt, and that he reflected with pleasure on the innocence of his private, and the integrity of his public life. He reproved the immoderate grief of the spectators, and begged them not to disgrace by their tears his death, as in a few moments he should mix with heaven and the stars. He entered into a metaphysical argument with Maximus and Priscus, his favourite philosophers, on the nature of the soul. He died after a reign of one year and eight months, in the thirty-second year of his age. A man of good understanding who taught children at Antioch, was in company with Libanius, who

^u Theodoret, B. III. c. 18.

^v I shall introduce here a circumstance which happened at Beroa, whither Julian went in his march from Antioch. There he found the son of an illustrious citizen, who had been disinherited by his father for following the religion of the emperor. Inviting them to dinner, and placing himself between them, he in vain endeavoured to unite them. Finding the father intractable, he promised the son to be a father in his place. His religious addresses to the people of this place were little regarded by the senate of Beroa, which was almost entirely Christian. So deeply had this place received Christianity, and so perseveringly preserved it since the days of the Apostles. Acts XVII.

^w Theodoret, B. III. c. 25.

asked him what the carpenter's son was doing. It was smartly replied, "the Maker of the world, whom you jocosely call the carpenter's son, is employed in making a coffin." A few days after tidings came to Antioch of Julian's death.^y The story is related also by authors somewhat differently; but its substance seems to be true, nor is there any occasion to suppose the school-master to have been possessed of the spirit of prophecy. The minds of Christians in general must have been extremely agitated during this whole scene of Julian's attempt against the Persian empire: Their ardent prayers for the preservation of the church, without the least personal ill will to their imperial persecutor, almost implied an expectation of his death in the answer to their prayers; and the extraordinary rashness, with which his military expedition was conducted, might lead mankind in general to hope or to fear, it would end in his ruin.

The conduct of Divine Providence is ever to be adored in hastening the death of so formidable an enemy to his people; whose schemes seemed only to require length of time to effect the ruin of the church. But he was suffered to aim at too many objects at once, the restoration of idolatry, the ruin of Christianity, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the conquest of Persia. That he should have pursued this last with such avidity, is an instance of the opposition of two parties to each other; both equally bent on the ruin of the church, a thing very common in history, by which the Lord frequently saves his people. How much more prudent had it been in Julian to have made an alliance with the Persian monarch, who would gladly have accepted it, and to have united with him in the destruction of Christians, against whom they both were equally incensed. Thus does God infatuate the counsels of his enemies, and lead them to quarrel with one another for the good of his church, rather than to unite for its ruin!

If philosophic pride had not entirely hardened the heart and stupified the conscience of the Apostate, he could never have boasted in his last moments of his innocence and integrity. Besides numberless evils which a mind not quite steeled against the checks of conscience must have perceived, the guilt of ten years' hypocrisy surely should have moved him to remorse. If sincerity be not essential to virtue upon every possible system, it is hard to say what is. But from the time of his initiation into the Platonic mysteries at Ephesus to his open avowal of Paganism, he dissembled in religion altogether; he openly professed the gospel, and secretly worshipped idols. His friend Libanius commends his hypocrisy. Philosophers in general, who held that every thing was God, and yet con-

^y Theodoret.

stantly practised all the rites of vulgar Polytheism, dissembled continually. The mind of Julian seems with astonishing inconsistency to have united, in sincere belief, the refinements of philosophy with the vulgar idolatry: but his hypocrisy with respect to Christianity, so artfully persisted in till the death of Constantius, is one of the completest instances of deceit I read of in history. That man must either be extinct at death, or be happy by a re-union with the Deity, was the belief of the philosophers in general; and Julian, like them, avows it at his death, and like Cicero,^a he had not the least idea of punishment for sin in an after-life. What is meant then by the praises so profusely conferred in our age on philosophic infidels? Are hypocrisy, Atheism, the extinction of the feelings of natural conscience, and a total exemption from all that modest sense of imbecility which is so becoming a frail creature like man, are these virtues? shall we be told, in triumph, how nobly Hume the philosopher died? Is the very worst frame of mind to be gloried in as the best? Is not scepticism and indifference about a future state a mark of what the Scripture calls, a reprobate mind, however it may be complimented by unbelievers with the appellation of a philosophical spirit? How much more amiable a prince would Julian have been, if he had lived like Antoninus Pius, following the rules of plain and common sense, and how large a part of the defects and vices of his character was owing to this same philosophy!

Yet a tear of compassion is due to this extraordinary man. He had seen a poor sample of the gospel in the lives and manners of the family of Constantine, and had suffered deep and cruel injuries from them. Philosophers cautiously watched him when very young, and infused their poison with dexterity. Useful lessons may be learned from history by young persons, who among ourselves having been educated by Christians of mere formal orthodoxy, are ever prone to be seduced by heretical philosophers. While those, who profess the gospel, are loudly called on to take care, that they express their religious seal by something more substantial than words and forms. Young minds who are under the influence of unfruitful professors, are seriously warned, by the apostacy of Julian, to perform with diligence, what he neglected, namely, to search the Scriptures for themselves with prayer. Had Julian been as studious of the Greek Testament as he was of Plato, and prayed as earnestly to God through Christ as he did or seemed to do to Jupiter and Apollo, he might have escaped the snare of Satan. But men confirm them-

selves in apostacy and infidelity, by hearkening to every thing that tends to produce these evils, and they avoid the force of divine truth by contemptuous neglect and indifference.

I wish the spirit of the church could be more an object of our commendation during this whole scene than it is. No doubt many prayed sincerely, and we have seen abundant proofs of godly men choosing to suffer rather than to sin. But it is evident, that there was a great want of primitive meekness and patience. Persecution under Julian was incurred too frequently by Christians without cause. Even just sentiments on this subject were lost by many. Sozomen, speaking of a suspicion that Julian was slain by a Christian, admits that if it were so, none could easily blame the action: and supposes that Christians might do innocently at least what heathen patriots have done so laudably.^a Such sentiments, compared with the primitive spirit of the gospel, mark the degeneracy of the times.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHURCH UNDER JOVIAN.

THIS prince succeeded Julian in the year 363, aged about 33 years; his reign was terminated by sudden death, after little more than seven months; nor was there anything peculiarly shining or eminent in his talents or character. Civil history does not distinguish him. In ecclesiastical history he merits a particular attention; for he is the first^b of the Roman emperors who gives some clear evidences, though not unequivocal, of real love to the truth as it is in Jesus. It were to be wished that the accounts of this emperor had been more explicit and large. Neither his faith, however, nor his practice^c seem to contradict what I have asserted, and Providence just showed him to the Roman world, that he might restore the sinking church, and then removed him.

In Julian's time he had given a noble mark

^a Sozomen. B. VI. c. 11.

^b The first Constantine seems in doctrine to have followed the Semi-Arianism of Eusebius, or perhaps more properly may be said to have not understood the gospel in any light; and the latter part of his life, it is allowed on all hands, was very faulty. Of Constantius nothing need be said. Of Philip, in the last century, we know much moral evil, notwithstanding his Christian profession. I could wish the reader, with me, to estimate the worth of characters by their spirituality and holiness, not by talents and exploits. If he does not, he will wonder that I should make light of the great Constantine in comparison of the obscure Jovian.

^c I say seem to contradict; for I am aware that Ammianus charges him with glutinous and libidinous excesses. But this author was not a Christian, and he expresses his hopes, that he might have corrected them, and owns that he was very sincere in his religion. This seems as much in Jovian's favour as may be expected from Ammianus.

^a See his Secretum, toward the end.

of Christian sincerity, by declaring, that he would rather quit the service, than his religion.⁴ Yet Julian kept him near his person, and employed him in his fatal expedition; an unequivocal proof, that his talents and capacity, though not of the first rate, were by no means defective. In stature he was much above the common size, and large in proportion, so that it was difficult to find an imperial habit that would suit him. The most striking feature in his character seems to have been a consistent frankness, openness, and integrity, such as I look for in vain among mere philosophers and mere heroes. Nor can it easily exist except in minds erected by divine grace above the crooked pursuits of secular ambition. Though the empire of the Roman world was in his eye, he forgot not that he was a Christian, and was solicitous to confess his Saviour, at a time when the cause of Paganism must have predominated much in Julian's army. "I am a Christian, says he, I cannot command idolaters, and I see the wrath of the living God ready to fall on an army of his enemies." "You command Christians, exclaimed those who heard him; the reign of superstition has been too short to efface from our minds the instructions of the great Constantine and of his son Constantius." Jovian heard with pleasure and assented; and the Pagans in the army seem to have been silent.⁵

The army was in a situation of extreme danger at the time of Julian's death; far advanced into an enemy's country, and without provisions. The rashness of his predecessor had involved Jovian in these difficulties; and compelled him to negotiate with Sapor the Persian king; whose craft imposed on the undesigning simplicity of the new emperor. By affected delays the old Persian monarch protracted the negotiation, till the increasing distress of the Romans for want of provisions enabled Sapor to dictate the terms entirely. Ammianus thinks it would have been a thousand times better to have tried the chance of war, than to have accepted any of the conditions: but Jovian was a Christian; he could not gain advantages by fraud and deceit in the course of the negotiation: the preservation of the lives of men was to him of more importance than of the

distant provinces which he was obliged to cede to Sapor; and it is remarkably providential, that the first instance we have on record of an ignominious and disadvantageous treaty concluded by the Romans was under a monarch, who it is hoped belonged sincerely to him whose kingdom is not of this world. Heavy are the complaints which Roman writers make of this dishonourable peace: Gregory Nazianzen laments it, but throws the blame on Julian: the Pagan historian Eutropius seems to justify Jovian, by calling it a treaty ignoble indeed, but necessary.

I seem to behold new maxims of government appearing under the first faithful emperor. The rule of the Psalmist⁶ in controversy was perhaps never more punctually followed than by Jovian. Though the inhabitants of Nisibis in Mesopotamia petitioned him with the most violent importunity to suffer them to defend their fortress against the Persian king, from their extreme unwillingness to leave their native country, he answered, that he had expressly sworn to deliver up the city, and that he could not elude an oath by vain subtleties. Crowns of gold were usually offered by cities to new princes. The people of Nisibis, willing to remain under the Roman government, very sedulously performed this act of homage. Jovian refused the crown; but they at length, in a manner, compelled him to accept of it. Nothing, however, could move him from his purpose. He obliged the inhabitants to depart with their effects, somewhat earlier than he would have done, had he not been exasperated by their insults and importunities. Yet he seems to have done all that circumstances allowed. He ordered Amida, whither most of them retired, and which had been almost ruined by Sapor, to be rebuilt for their use, and settled them there. Not only Pagan, but some Christian authors reproach Jovian for executing the treaty with so much fidelity. I confess he appears to me highly amiable in those very things, for which he has been so much censured. It was an act worthy of a prince who served Jesus Christ, to dread more the loss of truth and the wrath of God, on account of perjury, than the loss of territory. It is difficult for men to divest themselves of the regard for worldly honour and greatness. This illusion gives Jovian a mean appearance in the eyes of most writers.⁷ Could such a man be fit to govern an empire? let it be remembered, however, that if Christian principles place a man under disadvantages in some worldly respects, they compensate for these in others. The same fear of

⁴ I follow the Abbe de la Bletterie in his life of this prince, which is beautifully written; yet I keep my eye on the ancient historians all along.

⁵ Theod. IV. 2. Socrat. III. 22. Both these historians tell the same story, though the former somewhat more fully. Ammianus observes indeed, that the victims and animals were inspected for Jovian, on which account Mr. Gibbon exults over the destruction of Theodoret's legend. But who does not see, that the superstitious practice having been in high vogue under Julian, it might be continued, for the present at least, even without Jovian's knowledge? how does it appear that Theodoret's narrative deserves to be called a legend, any more than Ammianus', or even Gibbon's? Besides, this objector takes no notice at all of the authority of Socrates, who in candour and veracity is generally allowed to have been eminent.

⁶ Psal. xv. 4. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

⁷ It is astonishing how the Abbe de la Bletterie could be induced to think, that Jovian was not bound to execute his promise, and should write a dissertation in support of this opinion.

God, which hindered Jovian from breaking his word, would have kept him from entering into a war of such madness and folly, as he found himself involved in at his accession.

These secular transactions would not have engaged my attention, were they not connected with an illustration of the religious principles and conduct of the prince. When I can meet with an exalted personage, who evidences a Christian spirit, I shall think his actions belong properly to this history. But to proceed: at Carrhæ in Mesopotamia, a city wholly pagan, the messenger, who brought the first news of Julian's death, was near being stoned. Never was paganism more completely disappointed. Her hopes in an instant vanished as a dream, and the church triumphed in praising her God, who is ever faithful to his promises. Real saints would doubtless shew their thankfulness in a becoming manner; and Gregory Nazianzen was particularly careful in an oration which he published on the occasion to exhort Christians to display their meekness, humility and charity. But compassion for a perishing enemy, and fear at the prospect of prosperity, were not exhibited as they ought to have been. Antioch, in particular, personally hostile to Julian, and filled with Arianism, demonstrated, how much it had fallen from Christian purity. Public entertainments, sacred and profane festivals, filled this voluptuous city. Dances and public shews were seen in the churches; and the theatres resounded with insulting exclamations. There the victory of the cross was published, there Maximus was addressed, as if present. "Fond Maximus! what is become of thy predictions? God and his Christ have conquered."

Jovian led his army to Antioch, in which he remained six weeks, and applied himself to the regulation of religion. The conduct of his predecessor had involved him in intricate difficulties both in ecclesiastical affairs and in civil. The whole empire was torn with distractions, and Julian's affected toleration had been attended with the horrors of real persecution. Already on his death the temples were every where shut: the priests absconded, the philosophers had quitted the cloak, and resumed their common dress. To so great a despair were the pagans reduced. Within the church, the Orthodox and the Arians were every where at variance; Antioch itself was split into three divisions. The Donatists in Africa exercised a turbulence that required the interference of the Magistrate. The Novatians, faulty only in a narrow bigotry and excess of discipline, had kept up some good understanding with the general church, had joined her in the defence of the faith against Arianism, had endured persecu-

tion in common with her, while Arianism triumphed; and some of them at Martinism in Paphlagonia had cut in pieces several companies of soldiers, who under Constantius had been sent to oblige them to embrace Arianism. But during the reign of Julian, if we except the mad excesses of the Donatists, a kind of truce had prevailed among the contending parties. Immediately on his death their eyes were solicitously directed to his successor, to see what measures he would pursue. Himself a sincere believer of the primitive faith, he yet abhorred persecution. Convinced that conscience could not be forced, and that a voluntary religion only was acceptable to God, he made a law, by which he permitted the Pagans to re-open their temples, and exercise their religion. Yet he peremptorily forbade witchcraft and impostures. He suffered the public sacrifices, but put a stop to the overflows of magic and enchantments, with which Julian had filled the empire; in fine, he granted the Pagans more than Constantius had allowed, and placed them in the same state in which they had been left by the great Constantine. In this toleration there was an effective sincerity, to which that of Julian had no just pretensions. In the former reign the Christian found himself only nominally free; in the latter the Pagan found himself really so. Philosophers themselves were admitted to court; though it could not be expected, that they should become the bosom-friends of a Christian emperor. Some of the courtiers insulted them; Jovian himself was too just and generous to do it. Even Libanius and Maximus, the pillars of paganism and philosophy, were spared; we may thence judge how mildly others were treated. At Constantinople also sacrifices were publicly offered for the solemnity of the consulship of Jovian. He even permitted Themistius an illustrious pagan magistrate to harangue before him on the propriety of religious freedom, and the rights of conscience, and to thank him for the liberty which he gave to his subjects. His speech on the occasion need not be given; the sentiments are now common and trite; something right and something wrong, as is usual at this day, appears on the face of it. The right of private judgment and the iniquity of compulsion are justly stated; and like all men who are void of any true religious principle, he intimates that all religions are equally true and equally pleasing to God. But it seems a pitiable thing, that none of the learned and philosophical Pagans should have found out this doctrine before! if they had, how much Christian blood would have been spared! It would have redounded more to their credit, if they had made or propagated this discovery during the Christian persecutions. To speak of it now, when they were the inferior party, looks more like sel-

^b Socrates.

shness than liberality. Philosophers wrote against Christians with much animosity, and some of them joined actively in persecuting; I recollect not one before Themistius who pleaded for toleration.

At the same time Jovian declared Christianity to be the established religion, and replaced in the standard the figure of the cross, which Julian had taken away. He ordered the Christians to be restored to their churches, recalled their exiles, and reinstated them in all their privileges. One Magnus, an officer of note, had burned by his private authority the church of Berytus in Phœnicia. He was himself an unprincipled man, ardent in persecution. Jovian was very near beheading him; but contented himself with obliging him to rebuild the church at his own expense.

Thus did Jovian prove himself the defender of Christianity as the established religion, and of toleration at the same time. The ingenuity of man can proceed no farther in such a subject. The principles of church-government, which have for an hundred years subsisted among ourselves, were in their great outlines introduced by Jovian into the empire: and on the whole convey a just idea of the integrity of his heart and the soundness of his understanding.¹

Athanasius had no sooner heard of the death of Julian, than he suddenly appeared again at Alexandria, to the agreeable surprise of his people. A letter from Jovian confirmed him in his office, and it was conceived in these terms. "To the most religious friend of God, Athanasius. As we admire beyond expression the sanctity of your life, in which shine forth the marks of resemblance to the God of the universe,² and your zeal for Jesus Christ our Saviour, we take you, venerable bishop, under our protection. You deserve it by the courage which you have shewn in the most painful labours, and your contempt of persecutors and menacing words. Holding in your hand the helm of faith, which is so dear to you, you cease not to combat for the truth, nor to

edify the Christian people, who find in you the perfect model of all virtues. For these reasons we recall you immediately, and we order you to return, to teach the doctrine of salvation. Return to the holy churches; feed the people of God. Let the pastor at the head of the flock offer up prayers for our person; for we are persuaded, that God will diffuse on us and on our fellow-Christians his signal favours, if you afford the assistance of your prayers."

Jovian wrote to him again, to ask instruction with respect to the Arian controversy. Athanasius entering into his views, convened some bishops, and answered him in the name of the synod, recommending to him the Nicene faith, and defending it in his usual manner. Jovian directed him to come to Antioch, where he was graciously received. Arian and Candidus, two Arians, relations also of the emperor, came to him at Antioch, having conceived some hope of his favour. Euzoius also the bishop of that city, where Arianism was strong, and some other Arians, laboured to ingratiate themselves with the eunuchs of the palace, as their party had done in the reign of Constantius. The Macedonians too, the followers of the deposed bishop of Constantinople, who had taught them to deny the divinity of the Holy Ghost, solicited the emperor for the predominancy in the church. "I hate disputes, replied Jovian; I love and honour men of peace, and promoters of union." The Arians, confounded with such a sentence, communicated with Meletius the orthodox bishop of Antioch, and subscribed the council of Nice. It is difficult to believe their sincerity; under any of the most moderate account that can be given of the controversy, Arian duplicity must strike every reader. At any rate Jovian was not to blame; he plainly declared that he would constrain no man, and he said so sincerely. But power, not mere toleration, was their object. Jovian also strove in vain to heal the division between the followers of Meletius and Paulinus, which has been mentioned above.

The Arians of Alexandria¹ attempted to gain the episcopal See for one Lucius, a man void of all piety, and made application for him to the emperor with Lucius at their head. The friends of Athanasius sent deputies also on their part to oppose them; the interference of Constantine, and still more of Constantius in the expulsion of bishops in cities of great note in the empire, had established an unhappy precedent, which was followed too frequently. A short extract of the conferences may throw some light on the character of Jovian, and on the state of religion at that time. "We beg your power, your majesty, your piety, say the Arians, to give us audi-

¹ This praise seems due to Jovian in general for his conduct: at the same time I am far from pretending to determine precisely the line which he ought to have pursued. Numbers speak with great confidence on the subject of religious establishments and toleration, who have never weighed the difficulties with which it is involved. A more proper place to investigate it may occur, when we come to the reign of Theodosius.

² Mr. Gibbon calls this impious and extravagant flattery. Who but a person either exceedingly prejudiced or ignorant would have hazarded such an assertion? I scruple not to charge the learned critic with both. His prejudices will not allow him to bear a short interval of the propriety of Athanasius with patience, and his ignorance of the scriptures has led him here to express his prejudices with peculiar absurdity. Every child in divinity knows, that to say a man resembles God, or bears his image and likeness, means no more, than "that he is removed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," that he is what Adam was before the fall, what every Christian is made by grace. What an immensity of learning do some men attain, without knowing the very elements of the New Testament!

¹ Opera Athanasii, V. I. p. 782. See Bleterie's Life of Jovian.

enoc." Who and whence are you? "Sir, we are Christians." Whence, and of what city? "Of Alexandria." What do you desire of me? "To give us a bishop." I have ordered Athanasius to return to his See. "Sir, this man has been banished many years for crimes, of which he is not cleared." A soldier of the emperor's guard interposed. "Sir, give yourself the trouble to examine who these people are, the remains of the faction of George, the villain who desolated Alexandria." At these words, Jovian, (who was on horseback, when they met him) spurred his horse, and left them. The Arians were not so repulsed; they presented themselves to Jovian a second time. "We have several heads of accusation against Athanasius, which we are able to prove. It is thirty years since he was banished by Constantine and Constantius of immortal memory." The accusations of ten, twenty, thirty years, replied Jovian, are out of date. I know why he was accused, and how he was banished. A third time Jovian being importuned by the same petitioners, and the deputies of the Athanasians speaking at the same time, Jovian said, "when all speak together, one cannot understand who is in the right. Choose two persons on both sides; I cannot answer both of you." The Arians begged the emperor to set over them any person except Athanasius. "I have made inquiries, said he; he teaches sound doctrine." "It is true he speaks well, answered the Arians, but means ill." The emperor replied, "I need no other testimony; if he means ill, he must give account of that to God. We men hear words; God alone knows the heart." "The treasurer, said a lawyer, a Cynic philosopher, has taken some houses from me on account of Athanasius." Is Athanasius responsible for the actions of the treasurer? "I have a charge against Athanasius, said another lawyer, named Patalas, a Pagan." What business, said the emperor, has a Pagan like thee to trouble himself about Christians? Enraged at the attempts of the Arians to corrupt the eunuchs of his court, he made them to undergo the torture to discover the bottom of the intrigue, and said he would treat his first domestics in the same manner, if they followed such measures. He sent Athanasius to his diocese, where he lived ten years longer, and directed the affairs of the church.

The plainness and frank manners of Jovian, mixed with firmness, are evident in this account; so is the inveterate malignity of the Arians; and every serious reader will deplore the power which Satan gains over a people once tinged with the spirit of religious party in opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus, and will see matter of caution not to depart from the simplicity of the gospel.

While Jovian was at Antioch, he was

much aspersed by the wits of that city. His person, it was said, was formed, at the expense of his mind. The measure of his stature is that of his folly. Calumnies were propagated against him, and the spirit of satire was indulged with much freedom.

But notwithstanding these censures, the acknowledgments of pagans themselves in favour of Jovian, his talent of knowing men and employing them accordingly, his attraction to find out persons of merit, his care of Christian doctrine and piety, his integrity and openness, and above all his strict conscientiousness, the like to which I find nothing in pagan heroes and patriots, announced, though not the splendid genius, yet the man of sound understanding, and promised to the world a wise and pious government. It is impossible that Ammianus could have had a mean opinion of him, since when he speaks of his faults, he owns that he might have lived to correct them. He seems to have been a character of the solid, not the shining kind; the wickedness of the times, I fear, was unworthy of him. He was soon removed, and so very suddenly, that it was suspected he had not died a natural death; though of this no proof was given. The Christians sincerely wept, the Pagans in general spake well of him; the Arians soon endeavoured to take advantage of his decease, and the church was once more involved in persecution.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH UNDER VALENS; THE DEATH, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS OF ATHANASIUS.

JOVIAN was succeeded by two brothers, Valentinian and Valens; the former governed in the West, the latter in the East. Valentinian followed the plan of Jovian in the affairs of the church. Valens, a man of weak capacity himself, had not been yet baptized, and seemed as little qualified to judge of matters of religion, as of government. Valentinian, whom fraternal affection induced to make him his colleague in the empire, had been in vain advised to choose another person. The Arians, who under Eudoxius bishop of Constantinople, had ruled the capital in all ecclesiastical affairs, in the time of Constantius, rejoiced to find Valens equally supple and ductile as that emperor. Even the party of Macedonius, a sort of Semi-Arians, who allowed the Son of God to be like the Father, though not of the same substance, and who were likewise enemies to the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, could not gain the favour of the emperor, but were persecuted as well as the orthodox; while Eudoxius with the complete Arians, who would

not allow the similarity of the Son to the Father, engrossed all the churches. The Semi-Arians induced by these circumstances, entered into connections with Liberian bishop of Rome, and re-united themselves with the Orthodox churches of the West; yet one can have no great idea of the sincerity of this sect, as they would have probably persisted in their heresy, if Valens had favoured their notion: many of them, however, might be perverted by the subtilties of disputation, and be more orthodox in their hearts than in their expressions. Valens^m ordered all the followers of the Nicene faith to be expelled from Constantinople. In this persecution were included the Novatians. Their churches were ordered to be shut up, as well as their persons to be banished. For the orthodox of the general church had no places of worship from the days of Constantius; and Jovian their friend had not lived to come to his capital. One Agellus, the Novatian bishop, was exiled, a man of admirable sanctity and virtue, and remarkable for his perfect contempt of money. Yet was he restored not long after, and he recovered the churches of his communion. He owed this, under Providence, to one Marcian, a man of learning and piety, a Novatian presbyter, who tutored two daughters of the emperor. On this account the Novatians were at length tolerated, while the general church suffered the rigour of banishment and was silent by compulsion, and while the Arians tyrannised over all the Christian world in the East. Yet the Novatians were still infested by the Arians, because they cherished and loved in a tender manner their brethren of the general church.ⁿ

We must once more see Athanasius attacked by the enemies of Christian piety. About the beginning of the year 367, Valens, at the solicitation of Eudoxius, ordered the bishops who had been deposed in the reign of Constantius, and were afterwards restored, to be expelled from their churches. By virtue of this order Tatian governor of Alexandria attempted to drive Athanasius out of that city. The prelate had the hearts of his people. Long experience of his integrity and virtue, respect for his talents, and compassion for his sufferings had secured him

this the most reasonable and the most glorious of all empires. The prefect was so sensible of this, that for sometimes he dared not proceed to execute his orders. At length he broke one night with an armed force into his church, where he generally lodged, and sought for his person in every place, but in vain. Athanasius, probably warned beforehand of the danger, had retired, and remained for four months concealed in his father's sepulchre. This was the fourth time that he had fled from Alexandria. Valens, however, from the dread he seems to have had of the people, ordered him to be recalled, nor could Lucius, the Arian bishop of Alexandria, prevail on him to give Athanasius any more disturbance. About this time Valens himself received baptism from Eudoxius, who had such an ascendant over the weak emperor, as to induce him to swear, that he could never depart from the Arian creed.^o

A council was held at Laodicea in Phrygia about this time: a few of its canons shall be mentioned, as they will throw some light on the spirit of religion. One of them prohibits the ordination of men lately baptised; and so far agrees with the sacred rule.^p The choice of those appointed to the priesthood was not to be left to the people, but the bishops were to be chosen by the metropolitans, after a long probation of their faith and morals. In this, an alteration was doubtless made from the customs, which had obtained before the times of Constantine, and the metropolitans now exercised the same power which the Apostles had done, who doubtless ordained pastors in all the churches by their own authority. The council orders^q clergymen not to lend money upon usury, nor to visit taverns and houses of entertainment, nor to assist at the public shows exhibited at marriages and festivals. A proof, I fear, that their manners were grown more lax and dissolute. The invocation of angels is also solemnly forbidden; a proof that this species of idolatry had already crept into the church, and a condemnation of the practice of the Romanists. Presbyters are forbidden also to practise magic and enchantment: pity that there should be occasion to make such a canon! On the whole, this council, though it appears seriously bent on the support of good discipline and manners, evidences a great and deep corruption to have taken place in the Church of Christ.

Valens himself, being at Tomi, a city of Scythia, near the mouth of the Danube, ordered Brettannio the bishop to meet and communicate with him and his Arian attendants, who came to the bishop's church for that purpose. Brettannio firmly refused,

^m See. C. IX.

ⁿ *Hymonaeus non teverges*. B. IV. c. 9. Socrates. This historian, having himself a particular acquaintance with the Novatians, we learn something from him concerning this people. I wish he had given us more information. But their charity and tenderness toward the general church in its distress, while they themselves were indulged with toleration, and their suffering some molestation from the reigning party, because of their affection for those who endured persecution for righteous causes, reflects an amiable lustre on the character of these Dissenters. And I wish the lesson it is calculated to teach were well attended to at this day. Let men who love the faith of the gospel and are content to suffer for it in the world, adorn it by brotherly love, and leave political contentions and the arts of ambition to the enemies of the gospel.

^o Theod. IV. c. 12. Fleury, B. 16. 8.

^p 1 Tim. iii. 6.

^q Fleury, B. XVI. c. 12.

professing his regard for the Nicene faith, and leaving the emperor he went to another church, and all his congregation followed him. Valens with his attendants being left alone, was so enraged, that he ordered the bishop to be banished, though political reasons induced him soon after to permit his return. The Scythians were indignant at the banishment of their bishop, a man renowned among them for piety and integrity, and Valens dreaded their revolt. Of the conduct of Basil and Gregory Nazianzen in these times, it will be more proper to speak in the course of their story, as they are men who deserve to be held out to the more distinct attention of the reader. Antioch was sorely shaken with the conflicts of this persecution. There Arianism triumphed, both in numbers and in power, though the influence of the two orthodox bishops, Meletius and Paulinus, under God, preserved a considerable remnant. For wherever men of firm piety ruled in the churches, they were enabled to check the torrent. On the death of Eudoxius in 370 the Arians chose Demophilus in his room, and Valens approved of the election. The Orthodox elected at the same time Evagrius bishop of Constantinople. Valens incensed, banished both him and the bishop who had dared to ordain him.

On this occasion eighty ecclesiastics were sent to the emperor at Nicomedia to complain of his conduct. Enraged at their presumption, and yet afraid of a sedition, he gave private orders to Modestus his prefect, to murder them secretly. The execution of this order deserves to be known in all ages. The prefect pretended, that he would send them into banishment, with which they cheerfully acquiesced. But he directed the mariners to set the ship on fire, as soon as they were gone to sea. The mariners did so, and going into a boat which followed them, escaped. The burning vessel was driven by a strong west wind into the haven of Decidius, on the coast of Bithynia, where it was consumed with the ministers.* The intention of concealing what was done was frustrated; and the wickedness and inhumanity of the murder appeared more odious, by the meanness with which it was contrived.

Cæsarius the brother of Gregory Nazianzen had been recalled to court by Jovian, and Valens made him *questor* of Bithynia. His brother exhorted him to disengage himself from the world, which at length he did, and died soon after.

Athanasius had the courage to expel from the church the governor of Lybia, a man wholly given up to cruelty and debauchery: nor was the world then so degenerated, as to

despise altogether the discipline of the church. A council held at Antioch by the faithful, consisting of an hundred and forty-six bishops, pathetically bewailed the times: and among other things, they observed, that the infidels laughed at these evils, and staggered the weak; while true Christians avoiding the churches, as being now nurseries of impiety, went into deserts, and lifted up their hands to God with sighs and tears.

Meletius, who was the chief of this council, was banished the third time, and sent into Armenia, his own country. The other bishop Paulinus, whose flock was small, was spared. The Meletians deprived of their churches, assembled at the foot of a mountain near Antioch, and heard the word of God. But from this place also they were driven, and many of them were thrown into the Orontes.

Maximus, the philosopher and friend of Julian, was at length made a victim to the jealousy of Valens for some magical contrivances real or pretended.

At Edessa the Orthodox were wont to meet in a field; Valens ordered them to be dispersed; but the resolution of a woman who hastened thither as on purpose to suffer martyrdom staggered his mind, and caused him to cease from the attempt.

Another method was taken; the pastors of Edessa were sent into banishment; some of them were conducted to Antinous[†] where observing the greater part of the inhabitants to be Pagans, they employed themselves in taking pains for their eternal salvation. Protogenes particularly taught the children to write and to read the Psalms of David and suitable passages of the New Testament; and though the account we have here is very defective, there is reason to believe, that the progress of the gospel was increased by this means.[‡]

Athanasius died in the year 373, after he had been bishop forty-six years, and being desired to nominate a successor, he mentioned Peter an aged saint, and the faithful companion of his labours. Let us pause a little to view the writings and character of this great man.

A person so actively employed, and so wholly taken up during the course of a long life with a single controversy, is not likely to leave behind him writings very instructive to after-ages. I run through his works, and find nothing important in them, except what relates to the Arian controversy. As a writer, he is nervous, clear, argumentative, and every where discovers the man of sense, except in the life of Anthony the monk, and other monastic pieces; the superstitious and follijes of which unhappy perversion of piety

* See B. VI. 21

• Socrates, B. IV. c. 16.

† A place, I suppose, in Thebais in Egypt.

‡ Fleury 32. B. V.

received but too liberal a support from his influence. But such were the times; and in public life, the abuses of Christianity were so many, that I wonder not, that the most godly had the strongest relish for monasticism, in an age when the knowledge of the genius of the gospel was so much darkened. His two treatises against the Gentiles bid the fairest, to shew his general knowledge and spirit in religion, because they are exempt from the Arian controversy. In them he discovers the source of idolatry to be the corruption of the heart, in consequence of the fall. Men being fallen from God, cannot erect their minds to things spiritual, but sink down to things earthly and sensual. He allows the evil propensity of nature, and describes its effects very justly; at the same time like Justin and others of the fathers whom we have seen, he speaks of the free-will of man, and of his power of resisting this propensity, using the same Greek term. He speaks very solidly of the incarnation of the Son of God, describes it as essential to the recovery of fallen man, and speaks of the propriety of man's being taught by him, who is the wisdom of the father. Redemption by his cross he speaks of in a manner perfectly scriptural: but little is to be found in him of the experience of these doctrines, and their application to the heart and conscience, nor does he dwell much on the virtues and graces of the Holy Spirit. Opposition to Arianism absorbed his whole soul, and he keeps it in constant view throughout all his writings, or nearly so, except in his two discourses to the Gentiles. His address to Constantius is vehement and persuasive; but, though full of integrity, it is wanting in meekness. In his apology for his flight, he amply vindicates himself by scriptural and apostolical authority. His book on the Psalms explains very justly their excellencies. He shews, that in them is found the whole sum of duty, all the arguments of prayer, all the doctrines of religion, prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, and all the histories of the Old Testament: he observes with great propriety, that the believer may see in them the state and frame of his own soul, what he himself feels; and let a man's state be what it may, every one may find words adapted to his condition, and a true relief for every trouble. His treatise on the unpardonable sin is a monument of infirmity in a great and noble mind, and such an infirmity as men of great sincerity are more exposed to than others, I mean that of wrestling every subject that we handle, to promote the darling object of our own minds. To defend the Trinity was his; I wonder not therefore, that Arianism with him is represented "as the unpardonable sin," and truly

the conduct of the Arians in his time would naturally give an edge to his spirit. I have represented things in as faithful a manner as I can from the lights of antiquity which remain to us; and I must say, independently of all doctrinal sentiments, there appears no comparison between the two parties in their moral conduct. Every thing mean and sordid, cruel and inhuman, ambitious and perfidious, is found on the side of Arianism. The fruits of genuine religion evidently appear on the other side, so far as I can discover hitherto. However melancholy may have been the scenes of human wickedness, which we have reviewed, and however faint the marks of godliness in any person, still "real virtue was seen the attendant of orthodox sentiments alone." Is it to be wondered, that Athanasius, who knew and felt all this, should be betrayed into such an interpretation of the unpardonable sin?

In his defence of the Trinity, he guards it on all sides with extreme exactness. He is not solicitous to remove the mystery; he leaves the account as it always should be left, inadequate and imperfect, clear and exact only so far as the Scripture has explained it. He is not careful to clear it of the objections, and to answer the captious questions of the enemies of the doctrine. But all sorts of opposition to it find in him a just refutation. He asserts every where the Trinity in Unity. Among the rest, the heresy of Apollinarius, who denied to Jesus Christ an human soul, was by him effectually confuted. But not to dwell longer on a subject we have had so much occasion to consider, I observe that though the creed commonly called that of Athanasius be not his, yet it contains precisely his views and sentiments.

Athanasius shines, however, more in his life than in his writings: his conduct every where appears consistent and upright, sharpened too much by long and cruel opposition indeed, yet never governed by malice, always principled by the fear of God in this whole controversy. I doubt not but he was raised by a special Providence to defend the doctrine of the Trinity; and while men of no religion are blaming his asperity, let us admire the strength of that grace, which kept him so invincibly firm and calmly magnanimous, and through his means preserved to us this precious part of Christian doctrine. The Lord has ever raised up instruments of this strong and hardy cast to maintain his cause in the world; and let it be remembered, in regard to this great and good man, that after all the abuse thrown on his character respecting persecution, there is very much of persecution indeed, but persecution by him always suffered, never inflicted on others.

The choice of Peter, as his successor at Alexandria was confirmed by the whole church; and the almost universal respect which was paid to the virtues of Athanasius, seemed to put his election out of the reach of controversy. But imperial violence prevailed. By Euzoios of Antioch, Valens was stirred up to oppose Peter; and Lucius, whom Jovian had so contemptuously rejected, was introduced by the power of the sword. Then^a was seen the insolent cruelty of Magnus a Pagan, whom the mercy of Jovian had spared. Many Athanasians were murdered, and many treated with great outrages; while Arianism supported by the civil powers triumphed without controul. Nineteen priests and deacons, some very old, were seized by Magnus. "Agree, wretches, said the Pagan, to the sentiments of the Arians. If your religion be true, God will forgive you for yielding to necessity." "Forbear to importune us, they replied; we do not believe that God is sometimes Father, and sometimes not. Our Fathers at Nice confessed, that the Son is consubstantial with the Father." Whips and tortures, the grief of the godly, and the insults of Jews and Apostates, altered not their determination: they were banished to Heliopolis in Phœnicia. Palladius a Pagan, the governor of Egypt, sent many to prison, who had presumed to weep, and after he had scourged them, sent twenty-three of them, chiefly monks, to work in the mines. Other scenes of savage cruelty are related: it is tedious and unpleasant to enlarge on them; but it is a pleasure to behold the fruits of Athanasius's labours in the faithful sufferings of so many of his followers. Euzoios, having put Lucius and his Arians into the possession of the Churches, and left Alexandria in tears, returned to Antioch. What a bishop was this! but the Christian reader will steadily observe with me, that Christ had all along a real church, and that the cross is her mark, but the cross meekly endured: and were not Euzoios's conduct connected with this truth, his name would deserve no notice in this history.

The monks of Egypt, whose piety moved the common people, were courted by the Arian party; but they offered their necks to the sword, rather than quit the Nicene profession. A number of these were banished, but were afterwards permitted to return.^b Peter himself, though imprisoned, found means to escape; and in Europe, where Arianism had no power, he enjoyed a quiet exile.^c

^a Theod. IV. 22.

^b Sozom. VI. 30.

^c The piety of Terentius, an officer of Valens, deserves to be recorded. The emperor, pleased with his services, bade him ask a favour. The man begged the liberty of a place of worship for the orthodox. Valens in a rage tore his petition. Terentius gathering the fragments of the petition said, I have received a gift from you, O emperor. Let the judge of all the earth judge between us. — Centuriatore Madubergense.

At the same time among the Goths, by the cruelty of their king Athalaric, numbers of godly men were murdered for the sake of their Redeemer. Eusebius of Samosata, was expelled by the Arian tyranny from his See. He took particular care to preserve the life of the imperial messenger before his departure, and when desired with floods of tears by his flock not to leave them to the mercy of the wolves, he read to them that passage of the Apostle, which commands obedience to the powers that be.^a Excellent servant of Christ!^b

Some farther views of the church under Valens, will appear in the lives of Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, whom I studiously pass over for the present. Valens perished in a battle with the Goths in the year 378, after having reigned fourteen years.^c

^a Rom. xiii.

^b This is one of those bishops, of whom it was to be wished we had a more distinct account. His malice had exposed him to this persecution. In the disguise of a soldier, he had travelled through various parts of the east, to confirm the desolate churches, and to supply them with pastors. When the messenger of his banishment came to him,—"Consider the occasion of your journey, says he, or you will be thrown into the river, and your death laid to my charge." He himself retired with great secrecy, yet was he followed by the people. The testimony he gave of the primitive duty of piety under injuries was much needed in those times, when men had too much suspicion to suffer with meekness. He received very little from his friends for his journey, though their liberality would have supplied him abundantly. He prayed and instructed the people, and then retired in peace.

It will be proper to finish here all that I can find concerning Eusebius which is material. In the time of Constantius he had been entrusted with the care of a decree of a council held at Antioch, which the Arian party afterwards persuaded Constantius to order him to deliver up. He justly observed, that what had been delivered by a Synod, could only be returned by the authority of the same Synod. Even a menace that he should have his head cut off, prevailed not with him. Constantius admired his fortitude, and desisted.^d No wonder, that the people of Samosata, after his exile under Valens, admiring a man so firm and stout, refused to attend the religious instructions of the successor who was forced upon them; who, being a man of a meek temper, took much pains to ingratiate himself with them, but in vain. Eunomius (that was his name,) left them, because he could not gain their favour. The Arian put in his room one Lucius, who acted with more violence and encouraged the secular power to persecute.^e Eusebius lived however long enough to recover his See of Samosata after the death of Valens, and was at last killed with a tile by a zealous Arian woman in the town of Dolicha, whither he was come to ordain an orthodox pastor, the place being very hostile to the doctrine of the Trinity. He died in a very charitable spirit, insisting with his friends that the woman should not be brought to justice on his account, and oblied them to swear, that they would gratify him in this.^f

^e Valens, however, from whatever cause, a little before his death, recalled the exiled bishops. Lucius was driven from Alexandria; Peter recovered his See, and Arianism lost its external dominion a little before the death of its benefactor.

The Goths who had settled on the Roman side of the Danube, in the dominions of Valens, were by the advice of Eudoxius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, brought over to Arianism. Valens proposed that they should agree with him in doctrine; but they declared, that they never would recede from the doctrine of their ancestors. Ulfila, the bishop of the whole nation, of whom more hereafter, was induced by the presents and complaisance of Eudoxius to attempt to draw them over to the emperor's doctrine; and his argument, which I suppose he had from Eudoxius, was, that it was only a

^a Theodoret, B. II. c. 32.

^b Theodoret, B. IV. c. 15.

^c Theodoret, B. V. c. 4.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHURCH UNDER VALENTINIAN—THE BEGINNINGS OF AMBROSE.

LET us turn our eyes to a more cheerful prospect in the west; in the east the only comfortable circumstance has been, that God left not himself without witness, but marked his real church by a number of faithful sufferers. Valentinian, the elder brother of Valens, made a law in the beginning of his reign, that no man should be compelled in religion.¹ He restrained, however, this general license soon after, partly by seizing the revenues of the heathen temples, which the emperors annexed to their own patrimony, and partly by the prohibition of divinations and enchantments. On a representation of the governor of Greece, Achaia was allowed still to practice her heathenish follies. Other laws in favour of Christians followed.² One of the supposed oracles of Greece had declared, that Christianity should last only 365 years in the world. This period was now expired, and the event had falsified the prediction. In other instances this emperor was very indulgent to the Pagans, who might see themselves, both in the east and west, treated with far more lenity and favour than the church of Christ was in the east during the whole reign of the two brothers. Themistius, the Pagan philosopher, was struck with the cruelty of Valens, and while he inanimated, that perhaps God was delighted with the diversity of sentiments in the world concerning him, he intreated the emperor not to persecute any longer. This is one instance of the illegitimate charity now so common in the world, which founds the principles of moderation on scepticism, instead of that divine love, which is the glory of the Christian religion.

Ausentius, the Arian bishop of Milan, being opposed by Eusebius of Vercellæ and by Hilary of Poitiers,³ imposed on Valentinian by a dexterous use of those ambiguities of speech, in which the Arians all along excelled. Nor is it to be wondered at, that Valentinian should be deceived, since even

to this day the patrons of Arianism, by largely dwelling on the perfections of the Son of God, with a cautious omission of the term consubstantial, in a similar way frequently prevail on many, who do not or will not understand the true grounds of the controversy, to suppose that the difference of opinion is merely verbal. Hilary contended, that if this were really the case, the Arians could have no reason to avoid an explicit acknowledgment of the whole truth. To this it may justly be added, that their constant support of those who were undoubted opposers of the divinity of Jesus, and their constant enmity against its explicit defenders, evince the difference to be real, not imaginary; and so it will be felt by every one, who feels the worth of his soul, and is forced to see the difference between committing its salvation to the Creator and the creature. With equal justice Hilary complained of the Arian method of supporting their creed by military and imperial power: but he complained in vain; the duplicity of Ausentius prevailed, and he was suffered to continue at Milan in the practice of undermining the faith, without openly attacking it: the constant method of heresy in all ages. Whereas divine truth speaks directly and plainly, and must do so, whatever be the consequence. And in this sincerity the church must continue to the end, supported not by political arts, but by divine influence. In the year 366, died Liberius of Rome; how far he really recovered from his fall under Constantius, is not very apparent. He was succeeded by Damasus, who however was not established in his See without a contest with Ursinus, which cost a number of lives. So much were Christian bishops degenerated. But it should be observed, that there was a material difference in these times between pastors of great cities and those of smaller. What I mean, is well illustrated by Ammianus.⁴ "When I consider, says he, the magnificence and grandeur of Rome, I do not deny, but that those who are ambitious of this dignity, ought to use all their endeavours to arrive at it; since they by this means procure a certain settlement, where they are enriched by the offerings of the ladies; they ride in chariots richly clothed; and feast so splendidly, that their tables surpass even those of kings. They might be truly happy, if condemning the splendour of Rome, they lived like some bishops of the provinces, who by the plainness of their diet, their mean apparel, and the modesty of their looks, which are turned towards the ground, make themselves acceptable to the eternal God and his true worshippers."

Thus far this sensible and candid Pagan, who, by the concluding part of the passage

verbal dispute. Hence the Gothic Christians continued to assert, that the Father was greater than the Son, but would not allow the Son to be a creature. Nor yet did they wholly depart from the faith of their ancestors. Bede tells us, that there was no difference of doctrine at all, but that the rupture had arisen from a vile contention.

¹ Though the laws of Valentinian ran both in his name and that of his brother, I speak of them as his laws exclusively, because it may fairly be presumed, that he was the principal agent.

² See Cave's Introduction, Sect. IV.

³ I purposely avoid entering into details of the acts of this great man, as well as of some others, because their lives deserve to be considered as distinct articles.

• Theodoret, end of B. IV.

• Fleury, B. XVI. 2.

appears to have imbibed some Christian notions, and to support that mongrel character, which I have elsewhere attributed to him. While we lament how full history is of these splendid and opulent bishops, and how scanty our materials are concerning the humble and obscure ones, it behoves us to be on our guard against the malice of profane historians, who represent the church in these times, 'as altogether corrupt. It was very much so at Rome, at Antioch, at Constantinople, and other large cities, especially among the great and the rich. In the story of these we see continually, what an enemy riches are to the divine life. But among the lower orders and in obscure places, by the confession of Ammianus, upright and exemplary pastors were not wanting, and if we had an historical view of their labours and success, I doubt not but the church of Christ, even in the fourth century, would be seen with other eyes than it is by many.

I am endeavouring to catch the features of the church, wherever I can find her in this obscure region. I have distinguished formerly three species of Dissenters: the Novatians, the Meletians, and the Donatists. The first are by far the most respectable: of the second little is known, and that little is not to their credit: the third are flagitious by the confession of all writers. A fourth appears, the Luciferians, who, if they imbibed the spirit of Lucifer, must have been firm and sincere in the love of the truth. In the year 374, the emperor ordered all who held unlawful assemblies to be banished an hundred miles from Rome. In prosecution of this edict Damasus seems to have caused a Luciferian presbyter to be apprehended, who held a congregation by night in a private house; and he and some of the same class were banished. Notwithstanding this severity Damasus could not prevent these Dissenters from having a bishop of their own at Rome called Aurelius, who was succeeded by Ephesius, who also kept his station at Rome, notwithstanding the endeavours of Damasus to remove him. Gregory of Elvira in Spain was another of their bishops, a man whose firmness was extolled by Eusebius of Vercellæ. The Donatists had likewise a bishop at Rome, and another in Spain: but violence and ferocity still mark this people."

I have represented as fairly as I could the lights of history. The reader may judge for himself; but, in the general church, we seem to behold the first and most dignified rulers degenerated. Damasus, orthodox and violent in the support of orthodoxy, without humility and piety, is as strong a contrast to the primitive bishops, as Sharp, archbishop of St. Andrews in the time of Charles II. is to our first reformers. The persecuted Lu-

ciferians may seem to resemble the Puritans of the same period, while such men as Eusebius of Vercellæ and Hilary of Poitiers may be likened to archbishop Leighton. But though the spirit of the gospel probably prevailed most among the Luciferians, yet as I have already observed, this spirit was still in a degree preserved among the inferior and obscure pastors of the general church. But a new star is going to appear in the western world, and it behoves us to attend to its lustre.

Ambrose succeeded the Arian Auxentius at Milan, who died in the year 374. He was born about the year 333, while his father was the emperor's lieutenant in France. He was the youngest of three children, Marcellina and Satyrus being born before him. 'After his father's decease,' his mother with the family returned to Rome, where he made himself master of all the learning that Greece and Latium could afford; at the same time his sister Marcellina, who had devoted herself to a state of virginity, instructed him with much success in the principles of godliness. Being grown to maturity he pleaded causes with so much dexterity, that he was soon taken notice of by Anicius Probus, pretorian prefect of Italy, who made choice of him to be of his council: and having authority to appoint governors to several provinces, when he gave a commission to him, he said, "Go and govern more like a bishop than a judge." Ambrose in this office resided at Milan for five years, and was renowned for prudence and justice; when one of those sudden turns of Providence, which are so conspicuous in the lives of many persons of eminent godliness, threw him into a course of life extremely different from his former.

Auxentius by artifice and dexterity had, as we have seen, imposed on Valentinian, and preserved his seat to his death in the year 374. Immediately the bishops of the province met together concerning the election of a successor. The emperor sent for them, and told them, that they, as men best acquainted with the sacred volume, ought to understand better than he the qualifications necessary for so important a station. "Choose a man, said he, fit to instruct by life, as well as by doctrine, and we ourselves will readily submit our sceptres to his counsels and direction, and as men obnoxious to human frailty, will receive his reproofs and admonitions as wholesome physic." The bishop besought him to nominate the person, but Valentinian was resolute in referring the determination to them, as fitter than himself to decide." In the mean time factions were

^a See Paulinus' Life of Ambrose, prefixed to the works of that Saint. Cave; Fleury.

^b Those who have learnt from modern politics to exclude men of the sacred office from any regard in the

strong, and the Arian party vigorously laboured to provide a successor worthy of Auxentius. The city was divided, every thing tended toward a tumult, the bishops were consulting, and Ambrose hearing of these things, hastened to the church of Milan, and exhorted the people to peace and submission to the laws. His speech being finished, an infant's voice was heard in the crowd, "Ambrose is bishop." The hint was taken at once, the whole assembly cried out, "Ambrose shall be the man." The factions agreed immediately,^p and he whom secular pursuits had seemed to preclude from the notice of either party, was suddenly elected by universal consent.

Ambrose was astonished, and peremptorily refused; nor was any person ever more desirous to obtain the office of a bishop, than he was to avoid it. He even used methods which sound strange in our ears, and are by no means justifiable. By exercising severity on malefactors, and by encouraging harlots to come into his house, he took pains to convince them, that he was not that character of mildness and chastity, which he undoubtedly was, and which all believed him to be. The uncommon hypocrisy was, however, easily detected. Finding it was in vain to stem the torrent, he stole out of Milan at midnight, but missing his way, and wandering all night, he found himself in the morning at the gate of Milan. A guard was placed about his person, till the emperor's pleasure should be known, because his consent was necessary to part with a subject in office. Valentinian sincerely consented; and the consent of Ambrose himself alone was wanting. It is pleasing to see the testimony which the human mind, when left to itself, in all ages gives in favour of modesty and integrity, in consequence of the law written on the heart, which all the corruption of nature and the artifice of Satan cannot easily efface. Ambrose again made his escape, and hid himself in the country-house of a friend. A menacing edict of the emperor brought him again to Milan, because he dared not expose his friend to the resentment of the emperor. Ambrose yielded at length, and Valentinian gave thanks to God and our Saviour, that it had pleased him to make choice of the very person to take care of men's souls, whom he had himself before appointed to preside over their temporal concerns. Valentinian received his general admonitions with reverence; and in particular, hearing him represent the faults of some in authority with great plainness; "I knew," said the emperor,

the honesty of your character before this time, yet I consented to your ordination; follow the divine rules, and cure the maladies into which we are prone to fall."

Ambrose was then about thirty-four years old. Immediately he gave to the church and to the poor all the gold and silver, which he had. He gave also his lands to the church, reserving the annual income of them for the use of his sister Marcellina. His family he committed to the care of his brother Satyrus. Thus disengaged from temporal concerns, he gave up himself wholly to the ministry. Having read little else than profane authors, he first applied himself to the study of the scriptures. Whatever time he could spare from business, he devoted to reading; and this he continued to do after he had attained a good degree of knowledge.^q I wish Origen had been less the object of his study. But the renown of that Father was great, and this was not an age of evangelical perspicuity. His public labours went hand in hand with his studies. He preached every Lord's Day. Arianism through his labours was expelled from Italy.

There was a presbyter of Rome, one Simplician, a man of eminent learning and piety, whom he drew over to Milan, and under whose tuition he improved in theology. For his knowledge must have been very confined, when he entered upon his office, and what is very rare, he knew it to be so. Simplician he ever loved and revered. We shall hear again of this presbyter, when we come to the conversion of Augustine. It pleased God to make him an useful instrument for the instruction of both these luminaries of the western church, and as he outlived Ambrose, though very old, he was appointed his successor in the church of Milan. From Simplician, as an instrument, it pleased God successively to convey both to Ambrose and to Augustine that fire of divine love and genuine simplicity in religion, which had very much decayed since the days of Cyprian: and in this slow, but effectual method, the Lord was preparing the way for another great effusion of his Spirit. Ambrose now gave himself wholly to the work of the Lord, and restored purity of doctrine and discipline.

A council of bishops held about this time at Valence may deserve to be mentioned on account of one of its rules, which throws some light on the religious taste of the times. One Acceptus, having been demanded as bishop by the church of Frejus, and having falsely accused himself of some great crime to prevent his ordination, the fathers of the council say, that to cut off occasions of scandal from the profane, they had determined, that the testimony which every one gives of himself shall be treated as true, though they

councils of princes, will despite the weakness of Valentinian. Those who remember how useful the advice of Jehoiada was to Josiah, and who believe that piety and the fear of God are of some consequence in the conduct of human affairs, will commend his conscientiousness and his modesty.

^p Soc. B. IV. 30. Soz. E. VI. 24.

^q Aug. Confess. B. VI. c. 5

were not ignorant that many had acted in this manner, in order to avoid the priesthood. The deceit of Ambrose, in endeavouring to appear what he was not, seems then to have been no singular case. Modesty, tinged with superstition, was a characteristic of the best characters of this age. Evangelical light being dim, the spirit of bondage much prevailed among real saints. Let us be thankful for the clearer light of divine truth, which now shines in the church, and that a good man may enter into holy orders without that excess of fear, which prevailed over Ambrose and Acceptus. But while we wonder, that men could use such marvellous arts of falsehood through modesty and conscientious awe, let us not forget, that a future age may be as much astonished at the fearless spirit, with which such numbers can, in our days, rush into the church of Christ, with no other views than those of this world, and let us bewail their intrepid audacity, as well as smile at the superstitious simplicity of the age, which we are now reviewing.

Valentinian died in the year 375, after a reign of eleven years; survived by his brother Valens about three years. Violent anger had ever been his predominant evil, and a fit of passion at length cost him his life. Of some men we must say with the Apostle, that their sins follow after, while others evidence in this life what they are. Of the former dubious sort seems to have been the emperor Valentinian. Fierce and savage by nature, though of excellent understanding, and when cool, of the soundest judgment, we have seen him modestly submitting himself to the judgment of bishops in divine things, zealous of religion, so far as his knowledge would permit, which seems to have been very small. We are astonished to behold the imperious lion turned into a gentle lamb; and the best use to be made of his character is to prove, how extremely beneficial it is to human society, that princes should be men of some religion. Without this check Valentinian might have been one of the worst of tyrants: but by the sole means of religion he passed for one of the better sort of princes.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST UNDER GRATIAN AND THEODOSIUS, TILL THE DEATH OF THE FORMER.

GRATIAN, the elder son of Valentinian, succeeded him in Gaul, Spain, and Britain. His younger son, an infant, succeeded in Italy, and the rest of the Western world. And sometime after Gratian chose Theodosius as his colleague, who reigned in the East.

From his early years there appear unquestionable marks of real godliness in Gratian, to a degree beyond any thing that has yet been seen in any Roman emperor. One of his first actions demonstrates it. The title of high-priest always belonged to the Roman princes. He justly observed, that as its whole nature was idolatrous, it became not a Christian to assume it. He therefore refused the habit, though the Pagans still gave him the title.

As he was destitute of that ambition, which Roman pride had ever indulged, he chose a colleague for the East of great abilities, purely for the good of the states, and managed the concerns of his infant brother at Rome with the affection of a father. There, from the beginning of his reign, Gratianus the prefect, as yet only a catechumen, laboured earnestly to subdue idolatry. The mind of this young prince being strongly fixed on divine things, and being conscious of ignorance, he wrote to Ambrose of Milan to this effect, "Gratian Augustus to Ambrose the religious priest of Almighty God. I much desire, to be present in body with him whom I remember absent, and with whom I am united in mind. Come to me immediately, holy priest, that you may teach the doctrine of salvation to one who truly believes; not that he may study for contention, or seek to embrace God rather verbally than mentally, but that the revelation of the divinity may dwell more intimately in my breast. For he will teach me, whom I do not deny, whom I own as my Lord and my God. I would not conceive so meanly of him as to make him a mere creature like myself, who own that I can add nothing to Christ. And yet while I seek to please the Father in celebrating the Son, I do not fear lest the Father should envy the honours ascribed to his Son, nor do I think so highly of my powers of commendation, as to think that I can increase the divinity by my words. I am weak and frail, I extol him as I can, not as the Divinity deserves. With respect to that treatise which you gave me, I beg you would make additions to it by scriptural arguments, to prove the proper Deity of the Holy Ghost." Ambrose, delighted with the vein of serious attention to divine subjects, which appears in this letter, answered him in an ecstasy of satisfaction.—"Most Christian prince, says he, modesty, not want of affection has hitherto prevented me from waiting upon you. If, however, I was not with you personally, I have been present with my prayers, in which consists still more the duty of a Pastor. I use no flattery, which you need not, and which is quite foreign to my office. Our Judge, whom you confess, and whom you piously believe, knows that my bowels are refreshed with your faith, your

* Fleury, B. XVIII. 24.

* Ambrose's Epistles, B. V. 25, 26.

salvation, and your glory, and that I pray for you not as in public duty bound, but even with personal affection.—He alone hath taught you, who said, he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father." Toward the close, he reminds him that his own arguments for the divinity of the Son expressed in his letter are equally conclusive for the divinity of the Holy Ghost, whom we ought not to think the Father to envy, nor ourselves to be on an equal footing with him, who are mere creatures. Some writings of Ambrose remain to us as the consequence of Gratian's requests.

The errors of good men have in some instances proved prejudicial to the church. This was unhappily the case with Ambrose; all the world bore testimony to his sincerity, charity, and piety. But he had not strength to withstand the torrent of superstition, which for some time had been growing. He even augmented it by his immoderate encomiums on virginity. The little acquaintance he had with the Scriptures before his ordination, and the influence of his sister Marcellina, a zealous devotee, will account for this. He wrote treatises on this subject, he reduced the rules of it to a sort of system, and exposed himself to the ill-will of parents by inducing such a number of young women to follow them. It must be confessed, however, that he taught the essentials of Christian faith and love, and built his wood, *SAY, AND STURBLE* on the true foundation. He had no other arms, but those of persuasion, and his great success shewed the piety, as well as superstition of many of the female sex.*

Another part of his conduct was more worthy of his understanding. The ravages of the Goths gave him an opportunity to exercise his liberality. He scrupled not to apply the vessels of the church to the redemption of captives, and vindicated himself against those who accused him. In the instruction of catechumens he employed so much pains, that five bishops could scarcely go through so much labour, as he alone. At Sirmium in Illyricum, the Arian bishop Photinus had caused a wide departure from the faith: and there being a vacancy in the year 379, Ambrose was sent for to attend the election of a new bishop. The empress Justina, mother of young Valentinian, resided there at that time. She had conceived a predilection for Arianism, and endeavoured by her authority and influence to expel Ambrose from the church. He continued, however, in his tribunal, though insulted and harassed by the mob. An Arian woman particularly had the impudence to lay hold of his habit, and attempt to draw him among

the women, who intended to drag him out of the church. "Though I am unworthy of the priesthood, said he, it does not become you to lay hands on a pastor, you ought to fear the judgment of God." It is remarkable, that she died the next day. The minds of men were struck with awe, and Artemius, an orthodox minister, was elected without molestation. Those, with whom one sort of doctrine is as valuable as another, will feel themselves little disposed to relish or believe the story. But the laws of history require the strictest regard to veracity. The fact is unquestionable, whatever inferences men may choose to draw from it. And the humility and piety connected with the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity are well understood by every Christian.* But the foundation was here laid for the enmity of Justina, which afterwards broke out against Ambrose in a remarkable manner. At Antioch Meletius was now restored, and the churches, which had long been afflicted, recovered breath. Constantinople for forty years had been in subjection to Arian impiety and tyranny. By this time few remained in this great city, who knew any thing scriptural; truth and godliness had fled; the times were, however, now favourable for the recovery of the profession of the gospel, and Gregory of Nazianzum was appointed for this purpose. He found the city in a state little removed from heathenism.

In the year 380, Theodosius, desirous of co-operating with Gregory and other zealous pastors in the revival of Christianity in the East, published a law, by which he reprobated the heresy of Arius, and expressed his warm approbation of the Nicene faith. He gave notice to Demophilus the Arian bishop of Constantinople, to embrace the Nicene creed, to unite the people, and to live in peace. Demophilus rejecting his proposal, the emperor ordered him to give up the churches. "If they persecute us in one city, said the heresiarch to the people of his communion, our Master orders us to flee to another. To-morrow, therefore, I purpose to hold our assemblies without the city." He found, however, little encouragement to proceed, and afterwards retired to Bæræ, where he died six years after. Thus within forty years from the time that Eusebius of Nicomedia was violently intruded into Constantinople in the room of Paul, the sacred places

* Another story of the same kind will deserve to be mentioned here. Two courtiers of the emperor Gratian, being Arians, came to Ambrose, and desired him to preach on our Lord's incarnation, promising that they would come to hear him the next day. But they, meaning nothing except ridicule and scorn, took their horses, and rode out of town. It is remarkable, that they were both thrown from their horses, and perished. The congregation in the mean time growing impatient under the delay, Ambrose went up into the pulpit, and told them that he was come to pay his debt, but found not his yesterday's creditors to receive it; and then preached on the subject.—Paulinus's Life of Ambrose.

† 1 Cor. iii. 12.

* Paulinus's Life of Ambrose.

† Ambrose de virgin. 3 books, 11 Offic. Amb.

* Paulinus.

were restored to the church of Christ. For so I shall venture to call the Trinitarians, however low and reduced the spirit of godliness was, especially in the East, not only because they held the doctrine of truth, but because whatever of the true spirit of the gospel was found any where, rested with them. If the reader recollect the barbarities exercised on Paul, and the cruel conduct of the Arians, while in power, he will be struck with the difference between Theodosius and Gregory on one side, and Constantius and Eusebius on the other. I am far from undertaking to vindicate all the proceedings of the patrons of the Nicene faith; but undoubtedly their conduct was full of patience and meekness compared with that of their opponents. Constantinople was not now made a scene of carnage and violence. Men who fear God will exercise their secular prosperity in religion only to defend the truth, not to persecute its foes. And this is another instance to be added to the many, which have appeared, of the connection between Christian principles and holy practice.

Gregory being now confirmed in the See of Constantinople, the emperor called a council in that city to settle the distracted state of the Eastern church. There came thither three hundred and fifty bishops. But it was found much easier to expel Arianism and corruption externally than internally. The council was very confused and disorderly, greatly inferior in piety and wisdom to that of Nice, though it be called the second general council. One of the holiest men there was Meletius of Antioch, who died at Constantinople. Gregory justly observed, that as Paulinus was sound in the faith and of unexceptionable character, there could now be no reason, why the unhappy breach, so long continued in that church, should not at once be healed by confirming him in the succession. But faction was high, and charity was low at this time; he was over-ruled by the immoderate, and Flavian was constituted the successor of Meletius, as if they took pleasure in lengthening the reign of schism a little: for Paulinus was far advanced in years. In this affair the younger bishops had influenced the elder, though they could assign no better reason than that finding the bishops of the West ready to support Gregory's opinion, they thought those of the East ought to prevail, because Jesus Christ in the days of his flesh had appeared in Asia, not in Europe. So easy is it in the decline of piety for Christian formalities to be preserved, while human depravity reigns in the temper and spirit. Gregory in disgust soon after gave up his See.

This council very accurately defined the doctrine of the Trinity, and enlarging a little the Nicene creed, they delivered it, as we now have it in our Communion-Service.

The Macedonian heresy, which blasphemed the Holy Ghost, gave occasion to a more explicit representation of the third Person in the Trinity, which it must be owned is there expressed with scriptural precision and clearness.

About the same time Palladius and Secundianus, two Arian bishops, and the chief supporters of that heresy in the West, were condemned in a council held at Aquileia by the bishop of Milan, and were formally deposed. It is astonishing with what artificial dexterity Palladius evaded the plain and direct interrogatories of Ambrose,⁷ and while he seemed to honour the Son of God in the same manner as others, and to reduce the contest to a verbal dispute, he still reserved the distinguishing point of Arius. A subtlety ever practised by these heretics!

Theodosius, earnestly desirous to reduce all who professed the Christian name to an uniformity, once more attempted to unite them by a conference at Constantinople. But where the heart was not the same, it appeared that outward conformity produced only hypocrisy. The Novatians alone agreed cordially with the general church in sentiment. And Nectarius, the new created bishop of Constantinople, lived on a friendly footing with Agellius their bishop, a man of piety and of the first character.⁸ In consequence of this, these dissenters obtained from the emperor as ample a toleration as could reasonably be desired. Heavy and tyrannical penalties, were denounced in edicts against the rest, which, however, do not appear to have been executed. The denunciation of them itself was therefore wrong; though it must be owned, it proceeded from the best intentions on the side of Theodosius, who actually put none of his penal laws against sectaries into execution, and meant only to induce all men to speak alike in the church. How much better, to have taken pains in promoting the propagation of the gospel itself by the encouragement of zealous pastors, and to have given up the zeal for a chimera of no value, a pretended union without the reality!

In the year 383, Amphilocus, bishop of Iconium, coming to court with other bishops, paid the usual respects to the emperor, but took no notice of his son Arcadius, about six years old, who was near the father. Theodosius bade him salute his son. Amphilocus drew near, and stroking him, said, "Save you, my child." The emperor in anger ordered the old man to be driven from court; who with a loud voice declared, you cannot bear to have your son contemned; be assured, that God in like manner is offended with those who honour not his Son as himself.⁹ The emperor was struck with the

⁷ Fleury, B. XVIII. 10.

⁸ Socrates, B. V. c. 10.

⁹ John. v. 23.

justness of the remark, and immediately made a law to prohibit the assemblies of the heretics.

In the same year the emperor Gratian lost his life by the rebellion of Maximus, who commanded in Britain. Deserted by his troops, he fled towards Italy. He found the usual lot of the calamitous, a perfect want of friends; yet he might have escaped to the court of Milan, where his younger brother Valentinian reigned, if he had not been betrayed at Lyons. Adragathius invited him to a feast, and swore to him upon the gospel. The sincere mind of Gratian, measuring others by himself, and as yet not knowing the world, (for he was but twenty-four years of age) fell into the snare, and his murder was the consequence. All writers agree, that he was of the best disposition, and well skilled both in religious and secular learning. Ambrose had a peculiar affection for him, and on his account wrote a treatise concerning the Deity of the Holy Ghost. He tells us, and every thing that we know of him confirms the account, that he was godly from his tender years. Chaste, temperate, benevolent, conscientious, he shines in the church of Christ; but talents for government he seems not to have possessed, and his indolence gave advantage to those who abused both himself and the public. Divine Providence in him hath given us a lesson, that Christ's kingdom is not of this world; even a prince unquestionably pious is denied the common advantage of a natural death.^b When he was dying, he bemoaned the absence of Ambrose, and often spake of him.^c Those who have received benefit from a pastor in divine things, have often an affection for him, of which the world has no idea. The last moments of a saint are absorbed in divine things, compared with which, the loss of empire weighed as nothing in the mind of Gratian.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HERESY OF PRISCILLIAN—THE CONDUCT OF MARTIN—THE PROGRESS OF SUPERSTITION.

I JOIN these subjects together, to connect the ecclesiastical information of Sulpitius Severus, an historian who belongs to this period, an Aquitanian of great learning, and who wrote

^b Fleury, XVIII. 37.

^c A charitable action of Ambrose, though in opposition to Gratian's views, tended no doubt to raise his character in the eyes of that emperor. A pagan gentleman had spoken contemptuously of Gratian, had been arraigned, and condemned to die. Ambrose, compassionating his case, went to court, to intercede for his life. It was with great difficulty, that he could procure admission into the royal presence, where he prevailed at length, by his importunate solicitations, and saved the life of the condemned person.

a summary of Church-history, which he extended to his own times. What he records of transactions which passed within his own memory, and also what he collected by information of other parts of the empire, may deserve to be very briefly reviewed. Very little shall we find adapted to our purpose; the deep decline of evangelical purity will be the chief discovery we shall make; and he will thus make my apology for evidencing so little of the spirit of Christianity at this period, because so little is to be found.

The Priscillianists, an heretical sect, who seem to have combined all the most pernicious heresies of former times, had already appeared in the time of Gratian, and infected the greatest part of Spain. Priscillian himself, whose character is described by the classical pen of Sulpitius with much elegance and energy,^d was exactly fitted for the office which he filled: learned, eloquent, factious, acute, of great powers both of body and mind, and by a spurious modesty and gravity of manners, extremely well qualified to maintain an ascendancy over weak and credulous spirits. Idacius and Ithacius, the one an aged presbyter, the other bishop of Sossu, applied to the secular power, in order, that by the decrees of the magistrates the heretics might be expelled from the cities. The Priscillianists endeavoured to gain friends in Italy; but their corruptions were too glaring to procure them any countenance either from Damasus of Rome, or from Ambrose of Milan.

On the death of Gratian, Maximus the usurper entered victorious into Treves. While Ithacius earnestly pressed him against the Priscillianists, the Heresiarch himself appealed to Maximus, who took upon himself the office of deciding. Sulpitius very properly observes, that both parties were highly culpable; the heretics in spreading notions entirely subversive of Christianity, and their accusers in subserving only their own factious and selfish views.

In the meantime, Martin bishop of Tours, blamed Ithacius for bringing the heretics as criminals before the emperor; and intreated Maximus to abstain from the blood of the unhappy men; he said, it was abundantly sufficient, that having been judged heretics by the sentence of the bishops, they were expelled from the churches, and that it was a new and unheard evil, for a secular judge to interfere in matters purely ecclesiastical. These were Christian sentiments; and deserved to be here mentioned, as describing an honest, though unsuccessful resistance made to the first attempt, which appeared in the church, of punishing heresy with death. I scarce know any thing more disagreeable to the spirit of a really good man, than to think of punishing capitally persons whom

he is constrained to believe are walking the broad road to eternal destruction. He has no need to enter into the political arguments against it, which are fashionable in the mouths of infidels. He has much more weighty reasons against persecution, drawn from the genius of his own religion. To do what in him lies to prevent the conversion of a sinner by shortening his days—how contrary is this to the spirit of him^a who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them!

Yet there were found men at this time capable of such enormity, and it marks the degeneracy of the age. But Christ had still a church in the west, and Martin persevered with such pious zeal in opposing the hitherto unheard of innovation, and was himself so much respected for his piety and integrity, that he prevailed at first, and the usurper promised, that he would not proceed to blood against the heretics. Two bishops, Magnus and Rufus, however, changed his resolution afterwards, and he referred the cause to Euodius the prefect, who after he had found them guilty, (and they appear to have been defiled with all the impurities of the ancient Gnostics) committed them to custody, and referred them again to the emperor. Priscillian in the issue was put to death, and four other leaders of his sect. A few more were condemned to die, or to be banished. The heresy was not extinguished by this means; for fifteen years after the contention was extreme between the parties; Priscillian was honoured as a martyr; Christianity never received a greater scandal, though like all the rest, undeserved from the mouths of its enemies; and men, who feared God, and loved moderation and charity, wept and prayed in secret, despised and disregarded by the two parties, who trampled on all the rules of godliness. In the meantime the selfish and worldly passions triumphed in Spain, and though the form of orthodoxy prevailed, it was evident, that the power was reduced almost to the brink of destruction.

Let us attend to our business, and catch the face of the church, if we can. We see her in Ambrose, who coming to Maximus on an embassy from the younger Valentinian, refused to hold communion with his bishops, who had been concerned in the deaths of the heretics. Maximus, enraged, ordered him to withdraw. Ambrose entered upon his journey very readily, being only grieved to find an old bishop, Hyginus, dragged into exile, though it was evident that he was very near his end. The generous bishop of Milan applied to some of the courtiers to furnish him with conveniences;^c but in vain. A number of holy men, who protested against these barbarities, were themselves aspersed with the charge of heresy, and among the

rest Martin of Tours. Thus in Gaul and Spain there were three parties; first, the Priscillianists, men void of godliness evidently, and bearing the Christian name to disgrace it with a complication of heresies; secondly, men of formal orthodoxy, who persecuted the Priscillianists even to death, and ruined them as a sect, at the same time that they themselves disgraced the gospel by a life of avarice, faction and ambition; and thirdly, men who feared God and served him in the gospel of his Son, condemning the principles of the former by argument only, and the practices of the latter by their meek and charitable conduct. A division of men, not uncommon in the church of Christ; but let it be remembered, that the last sort are the true branches of the mystical vine, and are alone to be regarded as belonging to our history.

Martin was born at Ticinum in Italy, and in his youth had served in the army under Constantius and Julian; but against his will. His father, by profession a soldier, had compelled him. For he himself, when only ten years old, went to the church, and gave in his name as a catechumen. At twelve he had a desire to lead a monastic life. But being compelled to serve in the army, he was remarkable for his exemption from military vices, his liberality to the poor, and his reservation of nothing for himself out of the pay which he received, except what was necessary for daily food. At eighteen he was baptized, and two years afterwards left the army. Sometime after, falling into the hands of robbers among the Alps, he was delivered bound to one of them to be plundered; who leading him to a retired place, asked him, who he was. He answered, "I am a Christian." "Are not you afraid?" "I never was more at ease, because I know the mercy of the Lord to be most present in trials; I am more concerned for you, who by your course of life render yourself unfit to partake of the mercy of Christ." And entering into the argument of religion, he preached the gospel to the robber. The man believed, attended his instructor to the road, and begged his prayers. The new convert persevered in godliness, and this relation was taken from his account.^d

I must be brief in following our author through other parts of the life of his hero. It was an age of childish credulity; the human mind was sinking fast into ignorance and superstition. The Christian fathers and historians relate things extremely absurd; but this was the fault of the times, not of religion. The Pagan writers, their contemporaries, are no way their superiors. Few stories are told so by Sulpitius, good in their matter, and so authentic in their foundation,

^a Ambrose, Ep. 37.

^c A candidate for baptism.

^d Sulp. vita Martin.

as this of the robber. It was with difficulty that Martin was at length prevailed on to quit his monastery, and become bishop of Tours, to which office the universal voice of the people called him. He still preserved his monastic taste, and had a monastery two miles out of the city. Here he lived with eighty disciples, who followed his example; they lived in common, with extreme austerities. The celebrity of his supposed miracles had a mighty effect on the ignorant Gauls; every common action of his was magnified into a prodigy; heathen temples were destroyed, and churches and monasteries arose in their stead.

Maximus, courted the friendship of Martin in vain, who honestly owned, that he could not countenance a murderer and usurper. Maximus pleaded necessity, the providence of God, and that he had slain none except in the field. Overcome at length by importunities, the bishop supped with the usurper. A servant offered the cup to Maximus, who directed him to give it to Martin, expecting and desiring to pledge him. The bishop disappointed his hopes, and gave it to his presbyter.

Wonderful is the account, which Sulpitius gives of his patience and charity. But he speaks with partial affection, as of a friend, who in his eyes was faultless. The Scripture does not colour the characters of saints so highly; and I have no ambition to imitate Sulpitius. Many evils attend this spirit of exaggeration. The excessive admiration of men takes off the mind from looking to Jesus, the true and only Mediator; Sulpitius himself professes his hope of obtaining much good through the intercession of his deceased friend. What at first were only the more unguarded effusions of friendship, became at last habits of self-righteous superstition; and one of the worst corruptions of religion was this way gradually introduced, and in the end too firmly established.

Maximus, whatever were his motives, paid assiduous court to Martin, and together with his wife heard him discourse of divine things. She indeed seems to have admired him sincerely, and asked her husband's consent, that she might be allowed as a servant to attend upon him at supper. It was done accordingly; and our author compares her on this account to the queen of Sheba. In these transactions we may mark the progress of superstition.

The integrity of Martin appears very conspicuous in opposing the tyranny of Maximus. The latter strove in vain to reconcile him to the maxims of his government in the capital punishment of the Priscillianists, and endeavoured to persuade him to communicate with the bishops, who had been urgent in their condemnation. Martin refused, till understanding, that some of the

king's servants were going to put certain persons to death, for whom he had interceded, in order to save their lives he consented to communicate with men, whose conduct he abhorred. Even of this compliance he bitterly repented, guarded against any future communion with the party of Ithacius, and lived afterwards sixteen years in retirement.

On the whole, if less had been said of his miracles, and a more distinct view had been given of his virtues, Martin of Tours would, I believe, appear among us far more estimable. That he was pious, is unquestionable; that his piety was disfigured with monastic superstition exceedingly, is no less evident; but Europe and Asia now vied with each other in the promotion of false humility, and I should be ashamed, as well as think the labour ill spent, to recite the stories at length which Sulpitius gives us.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONDUCT OF AMBROSE UNDER THE EMPEROR VALENTINIAN, AND THE PERSECUTION WHICH HE ENDURED FROM THE EMPEROR'S MOTHER JUSTINA.

JUSTINA, the empress, was a decided patroness of Arianism. After the death of her husband, she began openly to season her son with her doctrine, and to induce him to menace the bishop of Milan. Ambrose exhorted him to support the doctrine received from the Apostles. Young Valentinian, in a rage, ordered his guards to surround the church, and commanded Ambrose to come out of it. "I shall not willingly," replied the bishop, "give up the sheep of Christ to be devoured by wolves. You may use your swords and spears against me; such a death I shall freely undergo." After this he was exposed to the various frauds and artifices of Justina, who feared to attack him openly. For the people were generally inclined to support the bishop, and his residence in the city, where the court was held, at once increased his influence, and exercised his mind with a series of trials.

The Arians were not now the only adversaries of the church; the Pagans themselves, taking advantage of the minority of Valentinian and the confusions of the empire, endeavoured to recover their ancient establishment. The Senate of Rome consisted still very much of Gentiles; and the pride of family-grandeur still induced the most noble to pique themselves on their constancy, and to scorn the innovations of Christianity. Symmachus, a man of learning and great powers of eloquence, headed the party, and

endeavoured to persuade the emperor to suffer the altar of victory to be restored to the senate-house. Ambrose wrote to Valentinian, that it ill became the Gentiles to complain of their losses, who never spared the blood of Christians, and who refused them, under Julian, the common liberty of teaching. "If he is a Pagan, who gives you this advice, let him give the same liberty which he takes himself. You compel no man to worship what he does not approve. Here the whole senate, so far as it is Christian, is endangered. Every senator takes his oath at the altar; every person who is obliged to appear before the senate upon oath, takes his oath in the same manner. The divinity of the false gods is evidently allowed by the practice. And Christians are obliged by these means to endure a persecution. But in matters of religion consult with God; and whatever men may say of injuries which they suffer, remember that you injure no man by preferring God Almighty before him."¹ We have still extant the address of Symmachus to the emperors on the subject in vindication of Pagan idolatry, in which he introduces Rome as a person complaining of the hardships to which she was exposed in her old age. We have also the reply of Ambrose, who introduces Rome observing, that it was not by the favour of those gods, that she gained her victories. In answer to the complaint, which the Pagans made of the loss of their revenues, he observes, that the gospel had increased by poverty and ill treatment, whereas riches and prosperity seemed necessary to the very existence of THEIR religion. And now that the church has some wealth, he justly glories in the use she made of it, and bids the Pagans say, what captives THEY had redeemed, what poor THEY had relieved, and to what exiles THEY had sent alms. But it is not necessary to enlarge on this subject. The advantage of the Christian cause in the promotion of liberality and benevolence among mankind, above all religions, is perhaps the only thing generally allowed even by infidels. Symmachus being foiled at present, renewed the same attempt before the emperor Theodosius, and was vanquished a second time by the eloquence and influence of Ambrose.

This prelate by his talents in negotiation at the court of Maximus averted for a time the invasion of Italy from the court of Milan. But nothing could move the mind of Justina in his favour. In the year 386, she procured a law to enable the Arian congregations to assemble without interruption.

Auxentius a Scythian, of the same name with the Arian predecessor of Ambrose, was now introduced, under the protection of the

empress, into Milan. He challenged Ambrose to hold a disputation with him in the emperor's court; which occasioned the bishop to write to Valentinian, that it was no part of the emperor's business to decide in points of doctrine.² "Let him come to church, says he, and upon hearing, let the people judge for themselves; and if they like Auxentius better, let them take him: but they have already declared their sentiments." More violent measures were now entered into, and the fortitude of Ambrose was tried in a manner which he hitherto had not experienced. Auxentius moved, that a party of soldiers might be sent to secure for himself the possession of the church called Basilica; and tribunes came to demand it, with the plate and vessels belonging to it. At the same time, there were those who represented, that it was an unreasonable thing, that the emperor should not be allowed to have one place of worship which was agreeable to his conscience. The language was specious, but deceitful. Justina and her son, if they had thought it prudent to exert their authority, might have commanded the use not of one only, but of all the churches: but the demand of the court was, that Ambrose should do what in conscience he could not, that he should, by his own deed, resign the church into Arian hands, which, as circumstances then stood, would have been to acknowledge, indirectly at least, the Arian creed. He therefore calmly answered the officers, that if the emperor had sent to demand his house or land, money or goods, he would have freely resigned them, but that he could not deliver that which was committed to his care. In the congregation that day he told the people,³ that he would not willingly desert his right; that if compelled, he knew not how to resist. "I can grieve, says he, I can weep, I can groan. Against arms and soldiers, tears are my arms. Such are the fortifications of a pastor. I neither can nor ought to resist in any other manner. Our Lord Jesus is Almighty; what he commands to be done shall be fulfilled, nor does it become you to resist the divine sentence." It seemed proper to state in his own words what his conduct was; and it appears, that he abated nothing of the maxims of passive submission to the civil power, which Christians had ever practised from the days of St. Paul, and that there is not the least ground to accuse Ambrose of disloyalty to his prince. He had served him already faithfully, and we shall see presently that he is again ready to expose himself to danger for his service. The court knew his principles, and seem not to have had the least fear that he should draw the people into a rebellion; but they

¹ Epistle of Ambrose, 30.

² Epistle of Ambrose, 32.

³ Orat. in Ausonem, p. 150, Paris edition.

wished to menace him into a degree of compliance with Arianism.

Ambrose during the suspension of this office employed the people in singing divine hymns and psalms, at the end of which there was a solemn doxology to the honour of the Trinity. The method of responsive singing had been generally practised in the east, and was introduced by Ambrose into Milan, whence it was propagated into all the churches. The people were much delighted, their zeal for the doctrine of the Trinity was inflamed, and one of the best judges in the world, who then lived at Milan, owns that his own soul was melted into divine affection on these occasions.^m

The demands of the court were now increased: not only the Portian church which stood without the walls, but also the great church newly built within the city, were required to be given up. On the Lord's day after sermon, the catechumens being dismissed, Ambrose went to baptize those who were prepared for that ordinance, when he was told that officers were sent from the court to the Portian church; he went on, however, unmoved in the service, till he was told, that the people having met with Castulus, an Arian presbyter, in the street, had laid hands on him. Then with prayers and tears he besought God, that no man's blood might be shed, but rather his own, not only for the pious people, but also for the wicked. And he immediately sent some presbyters and deacons, who recovered Castulus safe from the tumult. The court enraged sent out warrants for apprehending several merchants and tradesmen; men were put in chains, and vast sums of money were required to be paid in a little time, which many professed they would pay cheerfully, if they were suffered to enjoy the profession of their faith unmolested. By this time the prisons were full of tradesmen, and the magistrates and men of rank were severely threatened; while the courtiers urged Ambrose with the imperial authority; whom he answered with the same loyalty and firmness as before. The Holy Spirit, said he in his exhortation to the people, has spoken in you this day, to this effect; *EMPEROR, WE INTERCEDE, BUT WE DO NOT FIGHT.* The Arians, having few friends among the people, kept themselves within doors. A notary coming to the bishop from the emperor, asked him, whether he intended to usurp the empire. I have an empire, says he, it is true, but it lies in weakness, according to that saying of the Apostle, "when I am weak, then am I strong." Even Maximus will clear me of this charge, since he will confess, it was through my embassy he was kept from the invasion of Italy. Wearied and overcome at length with his resolution,

the court, who meant to extort his consent, rather than to exercise violence, ordered the guards to leave the church, where the bishop had lodged all night; the soldiers having guarded it so close, that none had been suffered to go out; and the people confined there having spent their time in singing psalms. The sums exacted of the tradesmen also were restored. Peace was made for the present, though Ambrose had still reason to fear for himself, and expressed his desire, in the epistle which he wrote to his sister Marcella, that God would defend his church, and let its enemies rather satiate their rage with his blood.ⁿ

The spirit of devotion was kept up all this time among the people, and Ambrose was indefatigable both in praying and preaching. Being called on by the people to consecrate a new church, he told them that he would, if he could find any relics of martyrs there. Let us not make the superstition of these times greater than it was. It was lamentably great, enough to stain the piety with which it was mixed. We are told that it had been revealed to him in a vision at night, in what place he might find the relics. But in the epistle which he writes on the subject he says no such thing. He describes, however, the finding of the bodies of two martyrs, Protadius and Gervasius, the supposed miracles wrought on the occasion, the dedication of the church, the triumph of the orthodox, and the confusion of Arianism. Ambrose himself too much encouraged all this, and in a language, which favoured the introduction of other intercessors besides the Lord Jesus Christ, whom yet it is evident he supremely loved, and trusted in for salvation. In all this, the candid and intelligent reader will see the conflict between godliness and superstition maintained in the church of Milan, both existing in some vigour, and each at present checking the growth of the other.^o

The news of Maximus's intention to invade Italy arriving at this time, threw the court of Milan into the greatest trepidation. Again Justina implored the bishop to undertake an embassy to the usurper, which he cheerfully undertook, and executed with great fortitude; but it was not in his power to stop the progress of the enemy. Theodosius, who reigned in the east, coming at length to the assistance of Valentinian, put an end to the usurpation and the life of Maximus. By his means, the young emperor was induced to forsake his mother's principles, and in form at least to embrace those of Ambrose. Whether he was ever truly converted to God, is not so clear. That he was reconciled to Ambrose, and loved him highly is certain: and in the year 392 in which he lost his life by a second usurpation in the

^m Aug. Conf. B. 9.

ⁿ Epist. 33.

^o Epist. 85.

west, he sent for Ambrose to come to baptize him. The bishop in his journey heard of his death, with which he was deeply affected, and wrote to Theodosius^p concerning him with all the marks of sorrow, and composed a funeral oration in his praise. The rhetorical spirit usually exaggerates on these occasions; but it is inconsistent with the unquestionable integrity of Ambrose to suppose, that he did not believe the real conversion of his royal pupil. The oration itself is by no means worthy of Ambrose; the taste is vicious and affected. Indeed panegyric, when it has not an object of magnitude sufficient to fill the mind, is ever frigid and grovelling, because it is continually affecting, but has not materials to support, the sublime.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CHURCH UNDER THEODOSIUS.

It will be proper to look a little more particularly at the conduct of this prince towards the church. He had been preserved in his younger years from the jealousy of Valens, who, by some superstition, had been led to suspect those, whose names began with THE, and to seek their destruction. After his exaltation to the empire from a private life by the generous and patriotic choice of Gratian, he reigned in the East, more vigorously supporting Christianity, according to his ideas of it, than any emperor before him. His sense of justice, however, determined him to order some Christians to rebuild at their own expense a Jewish synagogue, which they had tumultuously pulled down. I mention with concern, yet with historical veracity, that Ambrose prevailed on him to set aside this sentence, from a mistaken notion of piety, that Christianity should not be obliged to contribute to the erection of a Jewish synagogue. If the Jews were tolerated at all in the empire, the transaction ought certainly to have been looked on as a civil one. This is the first instance I recollect in which a good man was induced, by superstitious motives, to break the essential rules of justice; and it marks the growth of superstition.^q Nor is there any thing in the declamatory eloquence of Ambrose, which moves me to pass a different judgment.

The Luciferians still existing, intreated this emperor to grant them liberty of conscience; confessing themselves to be Christians, and contending that it was wrong in others to give them a sectarian name; at the same time declaring that they coveted not the riches and grandeur of other churches,

and in their censures not sparing Hilary of Poitiers and Athanasius. These last were doubtless men of great uprightness, and integrity. What they themselves were is not so evident as it were to be wished, because of the scantiness of information. They speak with extraordinary respect of Gregory, bishop of Elvira, as the chief of their communion; a man doubtless of high estimation, because Theodosius himself admits it, and grants them a legal toleration. I have before spoken of this class of dissenters, among whom, I apprehend, it is probable marks of the presence of God might be found, if their history had come down to us. But the reader, who knows how slight our information of these things is, while church history dwells chiefly on what is scandalous, not what is excellent, will not be surprised at my silence. The sect itself vanished soon after.

Theodosius was of a passionate temper, and on a particular occasion was led by it to commit a barbarous action; the circumstances of the story will be the best comment on the character of this emperor, of Ambrose, and of the times. At Thessalonica a tumult was made by the populace, and the emperor's officer was murdered. The news was calculated to try the temper of Theodosius, who ordered the sword to be let loose upon them. Ambrose interceded, and the emperor promised to forgive. But the great officers of the court persuaded him to retract, and to sign a warrant for military execution. It was executed with great cruelty. Seven thousand were massacred in three hours without trial, and without distinction.

Ambrose wrote him a faithful letter, reminding him of the charge in the prophet, that if the priest does not warn the wicked he shall be answerable for it.^r "You discover a zeal, says he, for the faith and fear of God, I own: but your temper is warm, soon to be appeased indeed, if endeavours are used to calm it; but if not regulated, it bears down all before it." He urges the example of David, and shews the impropriety of communicating with him at present. "I love you, says he, I cherish you, I pray for you; but blame not me, if I give the preference to God." On these principles Ambrose refused to admit Theodosius into the church of Milan. The emperor pleaded the case of David. "Imitate him, says the zealous bishop, in his repentance, as well as in his sin." Theodosius submitted, and kept from the church eight months. On the feast of the nativity, he expressed his sorrow with sighs and tears in the presence of Rufinus the master of the offices.^s "I weep, said he, that the temple of God, and consequently heaven is shut from me, which is open to

^p Epis. 31. and de obitu Valentiniani. ^q Epis. 29.

^r Amb. Epis. 51.

^s Theodoret, B. V. c. 18.

^t Ezech. iii. 18.

slaves and beggars." Ruffinus undertook to persuade the bishop to admit the emperor. Ambrose urged the impropriety of his rude interference, because Ruffinus by his evil counsels had been the author of the massacre. Ruffinus telling him, that the emperor was coming, "I will hinder him, says he, from entering the vestibule; yet if he will play the king, I shall offer him my throat." Ruffinus, returning, informed the emperor: "I will go and receive the refusal which I desire," says he. And as he approached the bishop, he added, I come to offer myself, to submit to what you prescribe. Ambrose enjoined him to do public penance, and to suspend the execution of capital warrants for thirty days in future, in order that the ill effects of intemperate anger might be prevented. The emperor pulling off his imperial robes, prayed prostrate on the pavement; nor did he put on those robes, till the time of his penance was expired. "My soul cleaveth to the dust, said he, quicken thou me, according to thy word." The people prayed and wept with him, and he not only complied with the rules of penance, but retained visible marks of compunction and sadness during the rest of his life.

Let us make as candid an estimate, as we can, of this extraordinary affair; I say, as we can. Moderns hardly can be sufficiently candid; so different are our sentiments and views. It is certain that these rules of humiliation are too severe, too formal, and by no means properly calculated to instruct: the growth also of superstition and the immoderate exercise of episcopal power are both strikingly evident. But what then? was Theodosius a mean abject prince, and Ambrose an haughty or hypocritical pontiff? neither the one nor the other is true. The general life of the former evinces him a great and wise prince, who had the true fear of God before his eyes; and the latter thought he did no more than what the office, which he bore, required; and his affectionate regard for the emperor, and sincere concern for his soul, appear evident. On the whole, the discipline itself thus magnanimously exercised by Ambrose, and humbly submitted to by Theodosius, when stripped of its superstitions and formalities, was salutary. Who does not see, that the contempt of discipline in our days, among the great, has proved extremely pernicious to the interests of practical religion?

On the murder of Valentinian, one Eugenius usurped the empire of the West, who again erected the altar of victory, and encouraged the Pagans; but their hopes were of short duration. Theodosius soon stripped him of his life and power, and thus became sole master of the Roman world. Under his authority the extirpation of idolatry was carried on with more decisive vigour than

ever. At Alexandria the votaries of the renowned temple of Serapis made an insurrection, and murdered a number of Christians. The emperor, being informed of this, declared that he would not suffer the glory of their martyrdom to be stained with any executions, and that he was determined to pardon the murderers in hopes of their conversion, but that the temples, the cause of so much mischief, should be destroyed. There was a remarkable image of Serapis in the temple; of which it had been confidently given out, that if any man touched it, the earth would open, the heaven be dissolved, and all things run back into a general chaos. A soldier, however, animated by Theophilus the bishop, was so hardy as to make the experiment. With an axe he cleft him down the jaws; an army of mice fled out at the breach he had made; and Serapis was hacked in pieces. On the destruction of idolatry in Egypt, it happened that the Nile did not overflow so plentifully as it had been wont to do. It is, said the Pagans, because it is affronted at the prevailing impiety; it has got been worshipped with sacrifice," as it used to be. Theodosius, being informed of this, declared, like a man who believed in God, and preferred heavenly things to earthly; "We ought to prefer our duty to God to the streams of the Nile, and the cause of piety to the fertility of the country; let the Nile never flow again, rather than idolatry be encouraged." The event afforded a fine comment on our Saviour's words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you." The Nile returned to its course, and rose above the highest mark, which, at other times, it seldom reached. The Pagans, overcome in argument, made use of ridicule, the great sanctuary of profaneness, and cried out in their theatres, that the old dotting god was grown so weak, that he could not hold his water. Numbers, however, made a more serious use of the remarkable Providence, and Egypt forsook the superstition, in which for so many ages it had been involved. And thus the country which had nourished idolatry, more early and more passionately than others, was made the special scene of the triumphs of God and his Christ.

Libanius, the friend of Julian, was yet alive, and held the office of Pretorian prefect under the emperor. The gentleness of this prince encouraged the sophist to present him with an oration in favour of the temples; in which he trod in the steps of Symmachus, and pleaded the cause of the gods, as well as so bad a subject would admit. It is remarkable, that he argued, "religion ought to be planted in men's minds by reason, not by force." Thus Pagans could now talk, who for ages had acted toward Christians in so

different a manner.* The writer of this oration was himself a palpable instance of the clemency of Christian governors compared with Pagan. He lived in a respectable situation, unmolested, the champion of expiring Pagans; and many others were treated in the same manner.

Coming to Rome, the zealous emperor, in a deliberate speech, endeavoured to persuade the senate, very many of whom still patronized idolatry, to embrace the Christian faith, as the only religion, which taught men how to obtain pardon of sin, and holiness of life. The Gentile part of them declared, that they would not give up a religion, under which Rome had prospered near twelve hundred years. Theodosius told them, that he saw no reason, why he should maintain their religion, and that he would not only cease to furnish the expense out of the exchequer, but abolish the sacrifices themselves. The senators complained, that the neglect of the rites was the grand cause, why the empire declined so much; a specious argument well calculated to gain upon worldly minds, and which had great effect on many Pagans at this time. We may see by and by, what a laboured and animated answer to it was written by one of the greatest and ablest of the fathers. Theodosius now made it a capital crime to sacrifice, or attend the Pagan rites. In vain did the patrons of idolatry exercise their parts and assiduity. The emperor was determined, and issued out a law that made it treasonable to offer sacrifice, or to consult the entrails of beasts.† Incense and perfumes were likewise forbidden. Paganism never lifted up its head after this; habit alone supported it; and objects of sense being removed, zeal was extinguished, and as Theodosius was not disposed to make martyrs, so no Pagans felt any inclination to become such. This great prince expired at Milan in the year 395, about sixty years of age, having reigned sixteen years. And the century before us nearly closes with the full establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire. The religion which was of God made its way through all opposition; that which was of man, supported only by power and custom, failed to thrive, as soon as it lost

the assistance, and within a generation it ceased almost universally to exist among men.

The real character of Theodosius is by no means doubtful. For, though the praises of Ambrose may be suspected, yet Ausonius Victor, a Gentile writer, must be credited, when he commends this emperor. His clemency, liberality and generosity were admirable. He was brave and successful in war; but his wars were forced upon him. He was an enemy to drunkenness, and was himself a model of gravity, temperance and chastity in private life. By a law he forbade minstrels and other servants of lewdness to attend at feasts.‡ Thus he is represented by a contemporary, whose account is certainly to be preferred to that of a later writer, the partial Zosimus, who treats every Christian emperor with malignity. I see in Theodosius the triumphs of the cross; nor in all the Pagan history of the emperors was there one to be compared with him. They had no principles to produce humility. The excess of anger was, we have seen, his predominant evil; and his case teaches at once two lessons: one is, that the best men need to guard daily against their besetting sins; and the other is, that even our infirmities may be turned to good account by the promotion of our humility, and the Redeemer's glory.

CHAPTER XVII.

REFLECTIONS ON ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

“But what right had Theodosius to make his religion that of the state? Ought not every person, in this matter, to be left to his own conscience? Is it not a violation of

* At this very time, while Theodosius treated Pagans with moderation, under a Christian establishment, the Christians were treated with unbounded cruelty under a Pagan establishment in Persia. The blameable seal of Audas, a bishop, gave the first occasion to it. Moved with divine seal, as he supposed, he overturned a temple in which the sacred fire was kept.‡ Indignant the king ordered him to rebuild it, which he refusing, the Christian churches were ordered to be destroyed, and the man to be slain. A persecution thus commencing on specious grounds, was continued for thirty years with unrelenting barbarity. The tortures of Christians were dreadful beyond measure; yet they persevered, and numbers voluntarily endured afflictions, for the joy of eternal life set before them.

† C. Cæsar's Introduction to the Lives of the Fathers, Vol. II.

‡ Called *magister*. See Theodoret, B. V. c. 39. Magduberg Cent. 4. c. 8.

‡ His wife Placidia appears to have been a pious and humble person. She was constantly reminding him of the private and low condition, in which they had lived together before his advancement, and exhorting him to attend to the duties of religion. She herself was an edifying pattern of condescension and liberality. The sick, the afflicted, the poor were relieved not only by her alms, but also by her benevolent attention and labour. Some representing to her, that it was beneath her dignity to take care of hospitals and the houses of mourning, she answered, “the distribution of gold indeed becomes the imperial dignity; but I offer to him, who hath given me that dignity, my personal labours as a token of gratitude.” That grace is strong indeed, which melts not under the beams of prosperity. Theodosius was once inclined to converse with Eusebius, an able Arian, who lived at Constantinople, and whom, on account of his heretical practices, he banished thence. But Placidia, who trembled for the salvation of her husband, (I speak seriously what Mr. Gibbon does scornfully, Chap. XXVIII. Vol. III.) dissuaded him from it. It is pleasant to see orthodox profession consistently united with virtuous practice: this can only be the case, where men are taught of God indeed. It ought to be known, that the emperor, who in the cause of God never yielded a tittle to heresy, in his own cause was weak and flexible, and with princely liberality supported the aged mother, and brought up the orphan daughters, of the usurper Maximus.

the right of private judgment to impose religious sentiments on the subjects of any government, and therefore can Theodosius, or others who have acted like him, be cleared of exercising tyrannical authority?"

There was a time, when the fallacy of such notions would have been seen through with less difficulty: at present, the tide of popular opinion runs strong in their favour, and it becomes more necessary to examine their foundation. Moreover, the characters of many of the brightest and best Christians are so interwoven in this question, and the determination of it so much affects the honour of the divine operations in the propagation of Christianity, that the reader, I trust, will be disposed to receive these reflections with candour and attention, however defective they may appear to him in some respects, or inadequate to the solution of several difficulties, which may be conceived to belong to this intricate subject.

I shall take for granted, that the gospel is of divine authority, and ought to be received, on pain of condemnation, by every one, who has the opportunity of hearing it fairly proposed, and that a man ought no more to plead the pretences of conscience for rejecting its fundamentals, than for the commission of murder, theft, or any other criminal action. The reason is, because its light and evidences do so unquestionably carry the impression of divine goodness and divine authority, that wickedness of heart, and not weakness of capacity, must be the cause of the rejection of it by any man. I send those, who are inclined to dispute these positions, to the many proofs given of them by the best evangelical writers in all ages, and above all to the Scriptures themselves, which every where declare, that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."^a If the reader bear these things in memory, he will find some of the most specious objections to ecclesiastical establishments overturned.

For, few persons will, I think, dispute the principle of general expediency and utility, as directly applicable to this important subject. Has not every state a right to ordain what it judges conducive to its preservation and the good of society? And, for these purposes, is any thing to be compared with right religion and the fear of God? What shall hinder then, but that the state has the same right to make laws concerning religion, as concerning property, commerce, and agriculture? Is it not a great mistake to separate religious considerations from civil? And while you attempt to do so in theory, will it not be found impossible in practice? And should not laws be always made for practice, and not for mere specula-

tion? The more the governors feel the importance of religion, (I speak not now for the next life, but for this) the more concerned will they be to establish it. They must do so, if they regard the temporal good of their subjects.

Then, briefly, these three considerations, namely, 1st, the clear evidences by which Christianity is supported; 2dly, the importance of its doctrines; and, 3dly, general expediency, appear to me to supply materials for an argument in favour of ecclesiastical establishments, which admits of no satisfactory answer. Thus: the gospel is of divine authority; its fundamentals are revealed with so much clearness, and are of so much consequence to the interests of mankind, that they cannot be rejected without great wickedness of heart; even the wrath of God is declared to abide on him who believeth not the Son. Under these circumstances, will any man, who thinks it the duty of the supreme power to consult the good of the community, believe it a matter of indifference, whether suitable forms of prayer and thanksgiving, or in short, whether a convenient and well-digested Liturgy,^a founded on the genuine principles of revealed religion, be composed for public use, and also whether proper persons and places be provided by the state for the worship of God and for the instruction of the people?

But besides these general reasons for a national establishment of true religion, there are other considerations relative to the same subject, which merit our attention.

It is certain, that from the earliest ages, and under patriarchal government, when holy men were favoured with divine revelations, governors taught the true religion, and did not permit their subjects to propagate Atheism, idolatry, or false religion.^b Abraham, Isaac,^c and Jacob^d governed their families in this manner; so did Noah before them.^e As families grew into nations, the same practical ideas prevailed. At length when it pleased God to select one nation for his service, the same sentiments respecting church-establishment continued, whether kings, or judges, or priests, were in possession of the executive power. I am aware that the Jewish government was a THEOCRACY, and that it has therefore many things peculiar to itself; but so much perhaps may safely be inferred from its constitution, that it is lawful for the sovereign authority to direct in matters of true religion. It is hardly to be

^a In such undertakings, the general aim, undoubtedly, ought to be, not to gratify this or that party in unreasonable demands; but to do that, which most tends to the preservation of peace and unity in the church; the procuring of reverence and exciting of piety and devotion in the public worship of God; and the taking away of occasion from them that seek occasion of cavil, or quarrel against the Ministry of the Church. See the preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

^b Gen. xviii. 19.

^c Gen. xxviii. 1.

^d Gen. xxv. 2.

^e Gen. ix. toward the end.

conceived, that God would interweave into his theocracy, what in its own nature is unlawful.

Nor is this argument, which depends upon the general administration of ecclesiastical affairs in the Jewish theocracy, much weakened by any conclusions that may be drawn from particular instances of divine interference and direction which occur in the history of the same theocracy. When the Jews are ordered to extirpate the Canaanites, and when Agag is hewed in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal, these are occasional instances of divine vengeance exercised against iniquity: we may readily admit, that such instances form no lawful precedents for governments to follow, while we maintain, that a mode of ecclesiastical administration ordained by God, and continued for a long series of years, cannot possibly be an improper example for religious magistrates to imitate. However, in contending for the lawfulness of such imitation, I would by no means be understood to include all the particular actions or measures of Jewish governors in ecclesiastical matters: the reasons of these actions or measures may have long since ceased to exist. In this argument I have respect only, in general, to the principal feature of the Jewish constitution, namely, the unquestionable authority, which the magistrates possessed in ecclesiastical regulations: a very remarkable fact! which I recommend to the serious consideration of those Dissenters from our church establishment, who do not hesitate to pronounce the interference of the civil magistrate in the religious institutions of a nation to be always unlawful.

If these reasons and examples be well weighed, it will hardly be doubted, but that when the gospel was preached among the Jews, if their Sanhedrim had received it, they would have had a right to make it the established religion of the nation. They might have said, and they probably would have said, This religion is true and divine; the people cannot reject it without rejecting, in positive wickedness of heart, the authority of God himself: the doctrines of this religion are of the utmost importance: it is therefore expedient, that it should be supported by the state, and we are countenanced in this conclusion by the example of our ancestors.

And in regard to such modern nations, as profess to believe the Scripture-history of the Jews and of Jesus Christ, it may fairly be asked, what are the peculiar circumstances, that should render it improper for the governing powers to feel the influence of the same reasons and examples? Can any good argument be invented to prove, that, in the momentous affair of religion, they ought not to be actuated by the grand principle of general expediency, when, in matters of less

consequence, they evidently shew themselves to be so actuated, and no one disputes the propriety of their conduct?

If an inferior state should fear the displeasure of a superior one in its neighbourhood, which might have sufficient strength to destroy it, will any man deny to the supreme power of this lesser state a right to prescribe to its own subjects a mode of conduct that should not give umbrage to the greater? If no man will deny this, let the concession be applied to religion: Irreligion and idolatry provoke the Almighty: a nation wholly given up to them has reason to fear his vengeance, especially if they persist in sinful practices against light and the fairest means of instruction. Then let the magistrate act consistently; let him only adhere to the acknowledged principle, that the government ought to promote the good of the state, and the reader sees the consequence. Indeed I do not perceive how the consequence can be avoided, unless it be clearly shown, that there is something in the history of mankind, which should lead us to suspect the soundness of this reasoning. But the practice of holy men of old in different ages, and the history of the earliest nations and of the Jews, have been proved to be all in favour of religious establishments.

But perhaps we may be called upon in this place to explain a little more distinctly the meaning and extent of that consequence, which we have affirmed to be unavoidable: we may be asked, whether we mean to conclude, that civil magistrates possess an authority, not only by which they may prescribe and support a national establishment of religion, but also by which they may compel the subject to receive the religion which they have instituted, and restrain him from practising his own religion, if he happen to think differently from the powers that be. And then a farther question will be asked, whether this be not to encourage persecution, and to exercise a tyranny over the conscience.

Without pretending to satisfy completely either these inquiries, or others of a similar nature that may easily be imagined, I endeavour to separate what is certain and important in this matter from what is doubtful and of less moment. I say, without the least hesitation, let no man be compelled to become a Christian; in strict truth, he cannot. Every man not only ought to have, but must have the right of private judgment. And as it is the absolute duty of Christian states, even for social and political purposes, to endeavour as much as possible to convert all their subjects to the true religion, so it is contrary to duty, that men should be forced to profess what they do not believe, because hypocrisy will be the certain, and an augmented enmity the probable consequence. It is one thing, however, to leave a man at liberty, whether he

will be a believer or not, another to allow him to propagate infidelity and idolatry. So also it is one thing to violate conscience by absolutely insisting on and extorting confessions of faith, another to preserve the sacred institutions of the country from being derided and profaned. The government has a right to restrain men, and oblige them to keep their irreligion to themselves, the same right as to oblige vessels to perform quarantine, when there is reason to suspect the plague. In this manner acted the great, the pious Theodosius; he compelled no man; he only restrained. Pagan emperors before him, and Popish princes since, not only restrained, but also compelled. The former is not persecution, the latter is; and I join cordially with the present age in detesting it.

Strange as this conclusion may appear to some, who have been habituated to another mode of thinking, I seem to be supported, not only by the general arguments which have been already advanced, but by the positive word of God. Job declares, that idolatry was an iniquity to be punished by the Judge.¹ He evidently speaks what was confessed by all to be just; nor is it to be conceived, that the Holy Ghost would have suffered him to impose an iniquitous sentiment on the reader in that manner. I repeat it; the general arguments drawn from expediency and the example of the Jews appear to me to justify the civil magistrate not only in instituting and supporting ecclesiastical establishments, but also in restraining and punishing the propagators of irreligious opinions. For can any thing be more plain, than that if public utility require a provision to be made for the worship of God and the instruction of the people in true religion, the same utility will require, that every thing should be suppressed, which has a tendency to destroy the efficacy of that provision, or diminish its influence? And on these principles acted the good kings, judges, and priests of Israel in abundance of instances.

Thus, by steps, which will probably appear neither tedious nor obscure, to such as have a real reverence for revealed religion, are we arrived at several conclusions, which are of the utmost consequence in practice.

I. The supreme power has no right to violate liberty of conscience by extorting confessions of faith.

II. It has a right—To establish the true religion by positive institutions.

III. To ensure public respect to these institutions by penal laws,

IV. To restrain and punish the propagators of irreligious opinions.

But it must not be dissembled, that the 4th conclusion contains a proposition in some measure undefined, and involved in difficul-

ties, which require further discussion. Who shall determine, to what extent the authority of the supreme magistrate reaches in the suppression of irreligious opinions? Where shall we find a common arbiter between him and the people, when they differ in their notions? Or is the magistrate permitted to restrain and punish the propagators of every sentiment, which happens to clash with the tenets, which he has introduced into his establishment?

It is much to be wished, that persons whose principles and habits incline them to give, in some respects, different answers to these inquiries, would, in the first place, seriously endeavour to find out, how far they actually think alike, and by so doing come nearer to a mutual agreement, before they embitter their tempers by acrimonious disputes concerning inferior matters, widen the breach of Christian friendship, and keep entirely out of sight the more important considerations, in which their judgments might have concurred. Sincere Christians of every denomination, who have duly weighed the arguments contained in this chapter, would then, I think, be disposed to admit that the propagators of infidelity, of idolatry, of atheism, and in short of gross irreligion, ought to be effectually restrained and punished by the civil magistrate; and if this be admitted, if men of every station heartily join in this conclusion, the existing laws against irreligion will be vigorously executed, and a great practical point will be gained.

Moreover, it would soon be agreed, that in matters of subordinate consequence, which are evidently not essential to Christianity, the civil magistrate ought not to interfere at all, by restraining or punishing such persons as differ from the establishment, but that he should suffer them to enjoy a complete toleration, and to serve God in their own way.

The essentials of Christianity ought, in my judgment, to be effectually protected by the laws, against the profane and libellous attacks of infidels of every denomination. I do not think it sufficient to say, "The truth will take care of itself." The unlearned and the unwary ought not to be exposed to the mischievous effects of such publications. Nevertheless, I am sensible that on this head it seems impossible to define the limits of the authority of the magistrate so precisely, as to exclude all doubt and ambiguity. For besides, that questions will sometimes arise even respecting the essentials themselves, the expediency of the punishment will frequently depend on circumstances.

There is a great difference, for example, between a serious inquirer after truth, and one, who makes a mock of religion; between the man, who proposes his doubts with modesty, and wishes to have them removed, and

the profane sceptic or infidel, who, under the pretence of candour and fair investigation, secretly rejoices in disseminating objections, and in undermining the faith of unguarded unbelievers. Add to this; it will not always be prudent to punish even those, who openly and scandalously attack the established religion of the country. In many cases, it will be much better to pass by the impudent offender with contempt, than by inflicting the penalty he has justly incurred, to excite the curiosity of the public, to make the libellous publication more known, and to render its unworthy author of more consequence.

It is not to be expected, that all should think alike. Let Christian fundamentals therefore be preserved as effectually as possible by an ecclesiastical establishment and by laws which defend and support it: let there be a toleration for those real Christians, who may not think themselves authorised in conscience to conform in all points, to the established church, but who still hold essentials: This is not only allowable, but perfectly just and equitable. To deny it is tyranny. Thus acted Theodosius with respect to the Novatians; and this seems the utmost limit of human wisdom in this difficult subject.

The advantages of a Christian establishment are doubtless great: the prevention of general profaneness, the decent observation of the Sabbath, and the opportunity of diffusing the gospel in dark and barbarous regions; all these things were the evident good consequences of the establishment during the fourth century. But let us suppose, that Constantine and his successors had contented themselves with encouraging the gospel, and had permitted idolatry and irreligion to continue unchecked. Considering the depravity of human nature, one sees not how without a miracle, Christianity would have pervaded the Roman empire at all; half or the major part of the Roman world might have remained in irreligion and idolatry to this day. Similar advantages of an establishment may be observed in the history of our own country.

On the other hand, it has been frequently said, that the great corruption of the gospel began from the days of Constantine. This, I have shewn already, was not the case. The corruption had begun a considerable time before, nor does it appear that the decline of vital religion was greater than might have been expected from the general course of things; and if no establishment at all had taken place, it would probably have been more rapid. There would certainly have been this remarkable difference, namely, that half of the Roman world, without the aid of the magistrate, would have remained destitute of even the form of Christianity. Corruption of doctrine and discipline ought not

to be laid at the door of ecclesiastical establishments, but to be imputed to the degeneracy of men themselves. It would not be hard to point out many persons in our own country, who voluntarily separate from the establishment, nearly void of church-discipline, and even more deeply and more systematically corrupt in doctrine than the most heterodox and unevangelical theologians, who inconsistently remain members of the church of England. The best ecclesiastical establishments cannot prevent the decay of vital godliness; but, under the providence of God, they strengthen the hands of sincere, humble-minded believers, and they check the influence both of open and of disguised enemies of Christianity.

The Liturgy alone of the church of England has long proved and continues to prove a strong bulwark against all the efforts of heretical innovators, and corrupters of doctrine.

If these arguments and observations were kept in view, dissenters who have been accustomed to speak disrespectfully of our ecclesiastical establishment, would probably find more to commend, and less to find fault with.

I shall not be surprised, however, if some persons still feel themselves dissatisfied with the result of these reflections. The subject is arduous and intricate, and has difficulties peculiarly its own. The variety of religious opinions among men is almost endless; and it is no easy matter to unite into one political mass, a multitude of particles totally heterogeneous with respect to each other. Much pains also has been taken to inculcate a notion, that religion ought to be "fettered by no political institutions." We have been perpetually asked, why should the majority, why should governors, why should any one dictate to us in religion? Why have not we a right to choose for ourselves, what religion we wish to propagate? However confident others may be of the rectitude of their system, may not we be as confident of the rectitude of ours? who shall decide between us?

This is specious, and many seem hence inclined entirely to separate religion from political considerations. "Appoint, say they, a good government, perfectly abstracted from all religion. Let the civil magistrate shew himself totally impartial in regard to all modes of faith; let him protect all persons so long as they obey the rules of civil society. Let the rights of conscience be kept sacred: in religion, man is accountable to God alone." Those, who hold out this language, cut the gordian knot at once, and would extricate us from all difficulties, provided they could prove, that it is really practicable, to erect a permanent government perfectly detached from all religious sanctions. But this would indeed be "A MIGHTY MAZE, and that WITHOUT A PLAN!" Suppose a

number should choose to be atheists: If this reasoning be good, atheism, as well as any other opinion, ought to be tolerated. Then, mark the consequences: the use of oaths, which among all civilized nations has ever been the legitimate method of ENFORCING ALL LAWS, is at once superseded. He must have a considerable degree of hardihood in politics, who would attempt to support a government contradictory, in its whole plan, to the universal voice of ancient wisdom. Certain it is, that in Scripture, all just governments are founded on the fear of God, and all legislators, Pagans as well as Jewish and Christian, have, with a greater or less degree of perfection, proceeded on this foundation. The belief of a future state, of some supreme Judge and Arbitrator of mankind, has ever been instilled into subjects by all lawgivers. It were easy to multiply proofs of this. Suffice it to give the testimony of one, who may be called himself a host, on account of his great knowledge of mankind, the extent and variety of his learning, and the solidity of his judgment. Plutarch *Advers. Colotem.* p. 1125. After having observed, that no man could ever say, that he saw a city without some sort of temple, or some mark of divine worship, subjoins, *ελλα παλις αν ητοι δευρι μαλλον ελαφρος χρεαι, ο πολειται, της περι θεου δεξης αναγκησιν παραστανει, ουτως αν λαβειν, ο λακουσιν ημεται.* "A city seems to me more capable of being built without a foundation, than a polity of receiving a system, or having received one, of preserving it, if sentiments of religion be entirely removed."

Will any adversary of religious establishments say, that no considerable part of a community will ever go the length of throwing aside all religion; and that, in these enlightened times, men will at least retain the belief of a God and of a future state?—I wish the contrary supposition could be proved an extravagant conjecture. What are the present doctrines of a neighbouring nation, who have not only rejected the sacred institutions of the Bible, as the Sabbath, and the division of the week into seven days, &c. but who have also lately discovered that death is an eternal sleep, and of course, that there is no reason to apprehend a future state of retribution?—When such strides as these are once taken, PRACTICAL atheism can be at no great distance. And as to a merely theoretical belief of one SELF-EXISTENT cause, or of several self-existent causes, where the Deity is excluded from being the moral governor of the world, such a speculative notion is hardly worth contending for.

It is too true that the effect of a general belief of religion on men's practice is faint and languid, and by no means proportioned to the importance of the subject; but perhaps we can scarce decide, how much better, in its moral influence, some principle is than

none at all. Men are naturally propense to wickedness; the common sense of mankind has in some degree always confessed this; and here by a singular concurrence of circumstances the language of poets has more truth in it than that of philosophers; the former speak the feelings of nature, and confess that men unrestrained will run into all sorts of wickedness. The latter by sophistry have perverted every thing in morals. How is it possible to construct a government, that shall preserve order and decorum for such depraved beings, without some religious establishment? The very attempt itself is to encourage atheism; and men, who find the regard of the divine authority to be left out of the class of political duties, will naturally be led to the greatest and the highest degrees of profaneness. To propagate impiety is to propagate human misery. Shall men be restrained, by the civil sword, from circulating whatever may be hurtful to the health and property of their fellow-creatures, and will you allow them, with no restraint of any kind, to propagate that which will poison the mind, and render human life an intolerable scene of evil? Whether men like the expression of ALLIANCE BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE, or not, there is a natural connection between government and religion, which, in practice, will appear, and have real effects, however plausible it may seem, in theory, to reprobate such connection.

On this occasion the laudable practice of some Dissenters from the established church is frequently appealed to, for the purpose of shewing, that love of Christianity and of our country, and all other virtues both public and private, may abound and flourish without the support of any laws in favour of particular opinions.—It is easy to shew that there is not much in this argument—and for this end, we need neither dissect it very nicely, nor detract from the merits either of individuals or of whole sects. Let it be admitted, that, in many cases, the conduct of Dissenters has been useful and exemplary. Yet who will deny that probably the existence, and certainly the energy of sectaries frequently depend in some measure on their opposition to the establishment? And happy it is for themselves, happy for the members of the established church, happy for the community at large, when an opposition of this sort shews itself in producing a virtuous emulation. We may then expect to see Christian examples of industry, learning, piety and patriotism.

But, without an establishment provided by the state, the greater part will scarce have any religion at all, wickedness will be practised on the boldest scale; and if the form of government have a large portion of liberty in its texture, the manners will be egregiously dissolute. Democracy indeed, par-

and unqualified, is the system which will harmonize the most easily with a polity altogether abstracted from religion; and this very consideration affords, perhaps, no inconsiderable argument against that species of government. But even if the government were, in other respects, the soundest and the wisest effort of human sagacity, it will probably prove only a curse to its citizens, unless some legal provision be made for religion. God himself, there is the highest reason to conclude, WILL SET HIS FACE AGAINST IT, and confound it. Nations, whose government has been seasoned with religious institutions, can scarce conceive to what lengths of villainy and flagitiousness, such an Atheistic institution will lead its subjects, and all Europe will not be at a loss, where to look for an instance of its effects!

Without entering minutely into the circumstances of Pagan nations, let us take it for granted, that there are certain fundamental articles of revealed religion, a few of immense importance, which the legislator ought carefully to select from a number of subordinate truths and circumstantials. These last he may safely leave to the consciences of men, by providing a toleration in which they may securely range. But the essentials of religion it is his duty to support, and not permit them to be derided and insulted by the profane attacks either of ignorant or of learned enemies of religion. To neglect them would obviously be a far greater crime in him, than in those, who have not had his advantages of information. Is it still said, who shall decide what these fundamentals are? If men would seriously weigh the doctrines of the scriptures, with an humble spirit, and in the use of prayer, they would probably be surprised to find, how very small would be their differences of opinion. And one thing, which I propose to shew in the course of this history, is the agreement of persons of this description in all ages; for in regard to fundamentals, it is certainly much closer and more uniform than many believe. No man ought to plead conscience for the neglect of that duty on which his salvation must depend. It is certain that these essentials cannot be neglected or despised without a turpitude of heart, which the scripture connects with the final ruin of the soul. The difficulty of providing a government equitably adapted to all consciences, if pushed into the extreme, supposes that there is no certain criterion of divine truth, and that men may, without moral guilt, believe any thing or nothing. But as these positions are inadmissible with all but Sceptics, and persons altogether profane, the connection between sentiment and practice is too important, to justify the neglect of all religion in political establishments, for the sake of pleasing the worst part of the

human species. If, after all, a government established on such principles bear hard on dissolute men, there seems no remedy; guilt must have its inconveniences. And there are no common principles on which a believer of revealed religion and an infidel can unite in the formation of a government.

The practical inferences are obvious. The subjects of a Christian government will consist of three classes.—The friends of the establishment, who will, of course, support it; Dissenters, who owning its religious fundamentals, differ in some subordinate sentiments; and those Dissenters, who are hostile to all religion, or at least, are fond of a religion subversive of the great truths of Christianity. The members of the establishment, at the same time that they support its institutions with firmness, ought to exercise forbearance and charity toward the first class of Dissenters, and to think no worse of any man for differing in opinion from himself, where it is evident that he acts with uprightness. They owe charity also to the second class of Dissenters, but charity of a very different kind. The first class of Dissenters, convinced of the importance and utility of religious establishments, ought to support that, of whose friendly protection they daily feel the benefit in society, while they enjoy the privilege of toleration; and to view themselves as coalescing with the churchmen, who, like them, hold what is fundamentally Christian, rather than with those Dissenters who oppose Christianity itself. To persons of this last character I can give no political advice, till they learn, antecedently, to receive the religion of Jesus itself, because till then, I can apply no principles to their consciences, which they will admit.

The happy government, under which we live, has, for many years past, exhibited to the world a fine example of an ecclesiastical establishment, framed and modelled according to the principles inculcated in this chapter. The great truths of religion are supported by laws; and the same laws provide effectual restraints against propagators of false doctrine. Notwithstanding the vice, heresy, and profaneness, which prevail among us, we do not so much stand in need of new laws, as of zealous magistrates to enforce those, which already exist.

It is sometimes said, that subscription to articles, and other tests of religious opinions, are injurious to the morals of men, by inducing them to act the part of hypocrites, for the sake of worldly advantage. Supposing this to happen in some instances, nevertheless the answer is, This inconvenience is to be hazarded, because unavoidable, if we aim at promoting the general good. It is expedient that there should be a public liturgy, and proper persons to read the same,

and to teach the true doctrines of Christ; and it is very necessary that these persons should be known to approve the forms of worship according to which they officiate, and to believe the doctrines, which they are bound to inculcate.

If some persons will, hypocritically, profess themselves believers of what in their hearts they think contrary to truth, the guilt of such persons will lie at their own door in this case exactly as in all others, where men act insincerely for the sake of gain or convenience. The true state of this question is, whether an ecclesiastical establishment wisely constructed, has not in its nature a tendency to propagate the influence of Christianity, that is, to make its doctrines known, and sincerely believed, and its precepts diligently practised among all ranks of people; and not, whether a sacred institution of this kind is capable of being, now and then, abused and perverted, or of becoming a snare and temptation to an unfair mind.

I shall conclude this subject with briefly taking notice of an objection, which, on its first proposal, is apt to startle the best wishers to religion, and the warmest advocates of ecclesiastical establishments. Suppose the civil magistrate should happen to have formed an erroneous judgment concerning the true religion. Will he not in that case, according to our own principle of general expediency, be justified in establishing a false one? I scruple not to give a decisive negative to this question, so far as it concerns those, who have had an opportunity of understanding and receiving the revealed will of God. For, the situation of such countries as have never heard of Jesus Christ and his Gospel, I do not here consider. The evidences of the truth of Christianity are so full and clear, that, as we have repeatedly said, they cannot be rejected without great wickedness of heart. Nothing therefore can justify the civil magistrate in establishing a false religion. Shall we restrain and punish by positive laws the individual, who propagates atheism or infidelity, and at the same time shall we approve the conduct of the magistrate, who erects and supports a national establishment of false religion, and who, by his institutions, prolongs and extends the mischief, much more than any individual, unarmed with the authority of laws, could possibly do? Such a magistrate may indeed plead his sincerity and scruples of conscience; but we have the authority of the word of God for ascribing his unbelief to gross negligence, or wilful blindness. There is then no difficulty on this head: governors of states, if they support a false religion, have reason to expect the heavy judgments of God. Let them consider the history of Jeroboam and of his successors in the kingdom of Israel. They all SINNED, AND THEY

ALL MADE ISRAEL TO SIN, IN PROVOKING THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL TO ANGER WITH THEIR VANITIES, that is, with their establishment of false religion; ^a UNTIL THE LORD REMOVED ISRAEL OUT OF HIS SIGHT.^b

A real difficulty, however, respecting the OBDIANCE of the subject may occur, whenever it pleases God, for the punishment of the sins of a nation, to permit a false religion to be established and supported by the ruling powers.

It may then be asked, whether a true believer of Christianity ought not to oppose the religious institutions of the country, in which he lives, and to propagate his own opinions; or whether he is to submit to the civil magistrate, "to bow down himself in the house of Rimmon," and to surrender that faith, upon which he depends for eternal salvation.

The general solution of these questions must be derived from a due consideration of the meaning of that apostolical maxim, "We ought to obey God rather than men."^c If therefore, through the corruption of human nature, the state will not establish true Christianity, but a false religion, I know no way to be pursued, but that of the Apostles, namely, for believers to propagate and to practice divine truth, and to suffer patiently for the truth's sake, according to the will of God. For, on the one hand, I find nothing in Scripture to justify Christians in resisting their governors by force, or in compelling them to make new ordinances; and, on the other hand, to comply with Anti-Christian institutions, would be to "sin a great sin," as Jeroboam's subjects did.^d The middle line of conduct is pointed out by our Saviour in that sentence, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another."^e

Several valuable miscellaneous articles must now be attended to, before we dismiss the fourth century.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PRIVATE LIFE AND THE WORKS OF AMBROSE.

If we had the real life of this bishop written by Paulinus of Nola, we might make a profitable use of it. But that, which goes under his name,^f is so stuffed with fables, that I scarce know how to quote it. Ambrose died about the year 397, admired, regretted, and lamented by the whole Christian world. His life not improbably had been shortened by the incessant activity of his mind, and by the multiplicity of his employments; for he was only fifty seven years old, and had been

^a 1 Kings xvi. 13.

^b Acts v. 29.

^c Matth. x. 23.

^d It is prefixed to the works of Ambrose.

^e 2 Kings xvii. 23.

^f 2 Kings xvii. 21.

appointed bishop of Milan at the age of thirty-four.

His spirit was remarkably kind and sympathetic; his benevolence was extended to all, but especially those of the household of faith. His estate, real and personal, he bestowed on the poor, and for the support of the church, styling the poor his stewards and treasurers.* His labours were immense: he administered the eucharist daily, and preached commonly every Lord's Day, frequently on extraordinary occasions, and spent much time in teaching catechumens. His temper was heroic and strong, and no dignity or authority could shelter offenders from his episcopal rebukes, where he deemed it his duty to reprehend. Augustine tells us, that he found it, in a manner, impossible to have access to him, because of the multiplicity of his employments. The time, he could spare from pastoral and charitable engagements, was devoted to study and meditation.

The moral writings of Ambrose contain various things of solid utility; his treatise on offices shines among these. It was evidently his wish to imitate Tully, and to show the superiority of Christian over philosophical morals. A noble design, but, considered as a whole, feebly executed, because conducted without a plan. He modestly owns indeed, that he was called to teach, before he himself had learned. But he might have both preached and written better, had he always attended to the simple word of God, and exercised his own natural good sense in humble dependance on DIVINE GRACE, and paid less regard to the fanciful writings of Origen, which corrupted his understanding exceedingly. Less of this, however, appears in his moral than in his theological pieces.

He speaks strikingly of the excellent use of taciturnity, and the difficulty of acquiring it, in his usual manner, which is sententious, and full of quick turns of expression. "I know most speak, when they do not know how to be silent. Seldom do you see any one silent, when to speak is of no profit. He is wise who knows when to hold his peace.—Must we then be dumb? no; for there is a time to speak, and a time to be silent. And if we must give an account of every idle word, take care, lest you have to answer also for idle silence. Tie your tongue, lest it be wanton and luxuriant: keep it within the banks: a rapidly flowing river soon collects mud."²

His ideas of decorum in behaviour and carriage he illustrates by the account of two persons of his own diocese. The first was a friend of his own, who by sedulous offices recommended himself to Ambrose, in order to be admitted as a clergyman into his bi-

shopric. The only reason why Ambrose refused, was because his gestures were light and indecent. The other he found already a clergyman, and made this sole exception, namely, of indecent levity, to his conduct. His judgment was verified in both. The former, during the Arian-persecution at Milan, deserted the faith; the latter, through the love of gain, denied himself to be a priest of Ambrose's diocese, to avoid judicial penalties.

His directions to his clergy would deserve to be made a part of an episcopal charge in every age of the church. "I think, says he, it becomes the prudence and gravity of clergymen, to avoid the public banquets frequently made for strangers: you may exercise hospitality to them at your own houses, and by this caution, there will be no room for reproach. Entertainments of this sort take up much time, and also evidence a fondness for feasting. Secular and voluptuary discourse is apt to creep in; to shut your ears, is impossible; to forbid, will be looked on as imperious. Why do not you employ the time which is free from clerical employments in reading? Why do you not revisit Christ, speak to Christ, hear Christ? We speak to him, when we pray; we hear him, when we read the divine oracles. What have we to do with other men's houses? let them rather come to us, who want us. What have we to do with idle chit-chat? We received the ministry to attend on the service of Christ, not to pay court to men."

In his book of repentance, he remonstrates with great justice against the inexorable spirit of the Novatians in refusing to re-admit penitents into the church. "Learn of me, says Christ, for I am meek and lowly in heart. I am unmerciful, says the Novatian."³ In the same chapter he bears testimony to the immaculate conception of Jesus, and to the native depravity of mankind. "He was not like the rest of us, born in the ordinary way of generation, but born from the Holy Ghost, and he received from the virgin a spotless body, with no taint of sin. For, all we are born in sin, as David witnesses, I was born in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me." I only remind the reader here of the preservation of two important truths in the church during the days of Ambrose.

Hear how humbly and evangelically he speaks of himself. "How shall I hear thee say to me, 'he has loved much, and is forgiven much.' I confess, my debts were greater than those of the penitent woman, and more was forgiven me, who was called into the ministry from the noise of the forum, and the terror of judicial administration. Yet, if we cannot equal her, the Lord Jesus knows how to support the weak, and to bring

* Orat. in Aux.

• Ibid and IIId C. B. I. de Officiis.

† B. I. de Officiis, xx.

• B. II. de penitentia; c. 8.

† B. I. c. 7.

with himself the fountain of living water. He came to the grave himself. O that thou wouldest come to this my sepulchre of corruption, Lord Jesus, and wash me with thy tears. If thou weep for me, I shall be saved. Thou shalt call me from the grave of this body, and say, come forth, that my thoughts may go forth to Christ and call forth thy servant. Though, bound with the chains of my sins, I am entangled hand and foot, and buried in dead works, on thy call, I shall come forth free, and be found one of those who sit at thy table. It shall be said, behold, a man, taken from the midst of secular vanity, remains in the priesthood not by his own strength, but by the grace of Christ. Preserve, Lord, thy own gift. I knew myself unworthy of the episcopal office, because I had given myself to this world, but, by thy grace, I am what I am, The least of all bishops: yet because I have undertaken some labour for thy church, preserve this fruit, lest whom thou calledst to the ministry, when lost, thou shouldst suffer to perish in that ministry; and particularly, grant me the spirit of sympathizing with sinners; that I may not proudly chide, but mourn and weep; that while I deplore another, I may mourn over myself, saying, Tamar is more righteous than I. Perhaps a young person may have sinned, deceived and hurried on into folly; we old persons sin also. The law of the flesh rebels against the law of our mind, even in us, whose duty it is to teach. Tamar is more righteous than I. We blame the avarice of another; let us remember whether our conduct has been stained with the same vice, which secretly dwells in our corrupt nature, and let each say, Tamar is more righteous than I. The same may be said with respect to the vice of anger. This is the way to avoid the severity of that just rebuke of our Lord concerning the mote and the beam.—He who rejoices in another's fall, rejoices in the devil's victory. Let us rather grieve, when we hear that a man perishes for whom Christ died. Let us repent and hope for pardon by faith, not as an act of justice. God wants not our money, but our faith."

Should any, who calls himself a minister of Christ, however dignified, distinguished, or denominated, read these lines of Ambrose, and catch a little of the tenderness, humility, and charity, which they breathe, and conceive more highly and more reverently of his office than he did before, and be stirred up to a measure of the same spirit, I shall rejoice that I have not laid them before the reader in vain. In truth, the ideas of the pastoral office were in Ambrose exceedingly serious, humble, and devotional. Have we not, too generally, great occasion to humble ourselves on comparing ourselves with him?

• Gen. xxxviii.

That holy men, who see and feel the evil of the world, should be tempted to seek for solitude and retirement, is so natural, that one does not wonder at the growth of the monastic spirit. The true security against it would have been, to have attended more closely to the scriptural rules of secular conduct given to Christians, and to have exercised more faith in those divine promises, which engage to preserve the soul in the midst of the world. Such an attention and exercise would have led Christians into a far nobler method of serving God, and letting their light shine before men, than that self-devised one, which many took, of retiring altogether from society. Ambrose, I have already observed, unhappily contributed much to the growth of this monastic taste; yet the following quotation shews, how serious and upright were his views, and how deeply conscious he was of the difficulties of the Christian life. "I wish a cautious and earnest affection for the things of God were as easy to be attained, as it is easy to speak of it. But the enticement of earthly lusts frequently creeps in, and the diffusion of vanity fills the mind. To avoid these snares is difficult, to be divested of them impossible. In fine, that the thing is rather matter of desire than effect; the prophet confesses, in saying, "incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." Our heart is not in our own power; our thoughts by sudden incursions confound the mind, and draw it a different way from what we have determined.—Who so happy as always to mount upward in his heart? How can this be done without divine aid? "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee."

He who feels so strongly the power of indwelling sin, needs the light of grace to conduct him. Nor was it wanting in Ambrose. In that age of declension, not of apostasy from the faith, the candlestick of Milan was possessed of as clear and steady a light, under the ministration of her angel, as any at that time in the Christian world. Hear his summary view of the Gospel-salvation: "God therefore assumed flesh, that he might abolish the curse of sinful flesh, and was made a curse for us, that the blessing might swallow up the curse; and that righteousness, pardon, and life, might swallow up our sin, our condemnation, and our death. For he underwent death, that the sentence might be fulfilled.—Nothing is done in the gospel against the sentence of God, since the condition of the divine sentence has been fulfilled.—We are dead with Christ: why then do we seek any more the acts of this life? For we carry about us the death of Christ, that the life of Christ, may also be manifested in us. We live therefore now,

• Ps. 84. Ambrose de Fuga seculi, C. 1

not our own life, but the life of Christ, of all virtues. We are risen with Christ, let us live in him, let us rise in him, that the serpent may not be able to find in earthly things our heel, which he may wound." The reader, who is well versed in St. Paul's epistles, will see how the spirit of them was understood by Ambrose.

The palm of heavenly-mindedness, in which the primitive Christians so much excelled, was still in the possession of many in the fourth Century. The last chapter of Ambrose, on the benefit of death, is remarkable in this light. Take a few sentences.

"We shall go to those who sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because, being asked to the supper, they made no excuse. We shall go, where there is a paradise of pleasure; where the wretched being, who fell among thieves, no longer weeps over his wounds, where the thief himself rejoices in the participation of the heavenly kingdom, where there shall be no more storms or vicissitudes, but the glory of God alone shall shine. We shall go, where Jesus has prepared mansions for his servants, that where he is, there we may be also.—The will of Christ is the same as performance. That we may know his true will, he hath said, Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory." "We follow thee, Lord Jesus, but draw us that we may follow; no one rises without thee; open to us thy good, which David desired to see, when he said, I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Shew us that good, which is like itself, always indissoluble and immutable, in which we may be eternal in the acknowledging of every good thing." There thy saints are freed from errors and anxieties, from folly and ignorance, from fear and terror, from all lusts and carnal affections. Let us seek him, and embrace his feet, and worship him, that he may say to us, fear not, I am the remission of sins, I am the light, I am the life: he that cometh to me, shall not see death:—because he is the fulness of divinity."

In his three books concerning the Holy Ghost he proves his Deity, partly by express testimony, such as God is a spirit, the Lord is that spirit; but chiefly by shewing that whatever is said of the Divine properties and acts of the Father and of the Son, is said also of the Holy Ghost.

In comforting Faustinus, who mourned for the death of a sister, he says, "If it be said to the soul, thy strength shall be re-

newed, as of the eagle, why should we grieve? why should we groan for the dead, when the reconciliation of the world with God the Father is made by Jesus Christ? As we hold the benefits of Christ before all men, and before you, we are ambassadors for Christ, that you should know his gifts to be without repentance, that you may believe as you have always done, nor bring your faith into doubt by excess of sorrow, because Jesus was made sin for us, that he might take away the sin of the world, and we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

In another epistle he gives an excellent view of spiritual illumination and of Christ dwelling in the heart: of which suffice it to say, that he has the same views and sensations, as holy men have confessed in all ages.

An epistolary address to clergymen deserves to be read by persons of this order in all ages. "It is, says he, a common temptation to the human mind, that persons meeting with some slight offence in the path of duty, are inclined to depart from it. In a clergyman such conduct is peculiarly lamentable. Satan labours by this method, if he can by no other, to offend them. What advantage is it to me to remain in the pastoral office, to be laboriously employed, and ill-treated, as if I had no other way of getting my bread? What, are worldly ends the governing motive, and do not you mean to lay up in store for the world to come?—Say not of thy God, he is a hard master; say not of thy office, it is unprofitable. The devil envies thy hope. Depart not from the Lord's inheritance, that he may at length bid thee enter into his joy. Farewell, my sons, and serve the Lord; for he is a good Master."

His expositions of Scripture are liable to great exceptions in point of accuracy, perspicuity, and order. The fancies of Origenism seduced him continually into vague and arbitrary interpretations. Yet is he true to the fundamentals of divine truth, and a rich unction of godliness will at all times afford to the reader that edification which is in vain to be expected from cold, but more faultless comments. The doctrine of predestination and election he evidently misunderstands: this part of divine truth had indeed scarce seen the light since the days of Justin Martyr. On justification, he is more explicit, and sometimes uses the term in its proper forensic sense. The fathers, in these times, commonly confounded it with sanctification, though, in substance, they held the true doctrine concerning it. Ambrose is perhaps more clear of mistake, in this respect, than most of them.

Yet he appears to have given into the same sort of superstitions concerning the dead,

* *Epist.* to Philemon.

John IV. 24. It is remarkable what he observes of the fraud committed by the Arians on the sacred volume at Milan, in the time of his predecessor Auxentius, namely, that they erased this text out of St. John's Gospel.

* *Epist.* viii. B. 2.

* *Epist.* xi. B. 3.

which I remarked in the historian Sulpitius Severus, nor is it to be denied, that he helped forward the growth of monastic bondage and prelatical pride, by giving occasion to others, who followed, to make use of his well meant positions, for the furtherance of their own wicked designs. The same thing must, however, be said of his works, as of those of many of the fathers, that great injustice is done to his memory by frauds and interpolations. In the dark times, every error and absurdity seems to have come forth with the pretended patronage of some of the renowned doctors of antiquity. In one or two instances alone, works have been ascribed to him, which in clearness of doctrine and excellence of composition exceed the size of his abilities, and I shall therefore defer the consideration of them at present.

But the lover of godliness, will be disposed to forget his errors and superstitions, faults of the times rather than of his disposition, and will remember only the fervent, the humble, the laborious, and the charitable bishop of Milan.

CHAP XIX.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL AMONG BARBARIANS, THE PROGRESS OF NOVATIANISM, AND OF MONASTICISM.

I HAVE but little to say on each of these articles, partly, because materials are scanty, and partly, because where they are more plentiful, they are uninteresting. Let us, however, collect from them, if we can, an enlivening ray or two of the church of Christ.

The Saracens, the descendants of Ishmael, afterwards so ennobled, or rather disgraced, by Mahomet the impostor, were at war with the Romans, under the conduct of their Queen Maovia, who was a Christian. The emperor Valens made peace with her, one of the conditions of which was, that Moses a monk, who lived in the desert between Egypt and Palestine, should be appointed bishop of her nation. Valens ordered him to be carried to Alexandria, there to be ordained by Lucius. Moses, who knew the Arian character of that Metropolitan, said before him and the magistrates, and all the people, stay, I am not worthy to be called a bishop; but if I am called to this office, unworthy as I am, for the good of souls, I take the Creator of all things to witness, that I will not receive the imposition of your hands, which are defiled with the blood of so many holy men. If you know not my faith, replied Lucius, learn it from my mouth, and judge not by reports. Moses, however, was aware of the Arian subtleties, and chose to stand by the evidence

of works. I know your faith, said he; the pastors exiled among infidels, condemned to the mines, thrown to the wild beasts, or destroyed by fire, testify your creed; the eyes speak more strongly than the ears.

Political necessities sometimes restrain the passions of wicked men. Lucius was obliged to dissemble his resentment, on account of the situation of Valens his master, and permit Moses to receive ordination from the exiled bishops. His labours among the Saracens were crowned with success. The nation before his time was chiefly idolatrous: that his work was blessed among them, appears from hence, that he kept them in peace with the Romans. But this is all the account we have of the fruits.

The Goths had long harassed the Roman empire with their incursions; but their depredations were made subservient to the progress of the gospel. I have observed under the last century, that some captive bishops laboured among them with good success. And the work was of an abiding nature. Ulfilas, who is called the apostle of the Goths, was descended from some of these. He, coming ambassador to Constantine, was ordained first bishop of the Christian Goths by Eusebius of Nicomedia. I have shewn from a passage in Theodoret, that the Arians seem to have imposed on him by an ambiguity of terms, in consequence of which he drew over his Goths to communicate with that sect. Certain it is, that this people held the Nicene faith for a considerable time, if we may credit Augustine. In the time of Valens many of them suffered death from an idolatrous persecuting prince of their own. Ulfilas, coming from his countrymen on an embassy to Valens, that he might induce him to allow them a settlement in Thrace, was on that occasion brought over to communicate with the Arians. That he was a man of superior genius and endowments, is certain. He civilized and polished this barbarous people, and first introduced the use of letters among them, and translated the Scriptures into their tongue for their use, omitting the books of the kings, because he thought it might encourage the ferociousness of the Goths, who were already too warlike. A copy of his version of the four Gospels is still extant, a monument of the ancient Teutonic language. It is with regret, I leave the account of this great man so imperfect, whose labours and success seem to shew, that the hand of the Lord must have been with him. But, however innocent he and his contemporaries might be of the Arian heresy, the effect of their communication with the party was what might be foreseen. The whole church of the Goths, by degrees at least, came into

Arianism, and the consequences will meet us in the course of this history.*

Heresies multiplied in this century, chiefly through the various ramifications of Arianism, which have been explained with more than sufficient accuracy by many writers. Of the dissenters, the Meletians continued throughout the century. The Donatists still remained in all their ferocity; of whom it will be more convenient to speak hereafter. The Novatians have found in the candid Socrates, an historian who gives us some authentic information, having himself been acquainted with the son of one of their presbyters. In Phrygia and Paphlagonia their church was in a flourishing state to his day. The general church, though surely right in its principle of opposition to the particular point of Novatian inflexibility, yet afterward abused the licence of re-admission into the church granted to offenders; and as discipline relaxed in various places, all kinds of crimes abounded.—The people of Phrygia and Pamphylia, being habitually an abstemious people, averse to pleasures, and to the indulgence of sensuality, were on that account the more disposed to admit the severities of Novatianism.^a In this century, a part of them separated themselves still farther from the general church, by appointing in a synod, that Easter should be observed at the same time, that the Jews kept the feast of unleavened bread. But as Agellius the Novatian bishop of Constantinople, and other more celebrated bishops of their denomination were not present, a schism was formed, from this circumstance, among them. Agellius presided forty years over their church at Constantinople, and died in the sixth year of Theodosius. When he was near his end, he ordained Sisinnius to be his successor, a presbyter of the church,^b of great learning, who had been instructed by Maximus, the famous friend of Julian. The flock of Agellius murmured, because he had not ordained Marcian, a man of eminent piety, by whose means they had weathered, in safety, the persecution of Valens. The aged bishop willing to pacify them, ordained Marcian, and directed, that he should be his immediate successor, and that Sisinnius should be the next bishop to Marcian.

Thus slender and scanty are the accounts left us of a bishop, who for so many years presided over a great flock in turbulent and trying times. On Marcian's succession, one Sabbatius, a Jew, receiving Christianity, was advanced by him to the office of presbyter, and in his heart panted after a bishopric. This man undertook to defend the innovation concerning Easter, which has been mentioned; and first, under pretence of greater strictness of life, he withdrew himself from

the church, declaring that he could not conscientiously communicate with some members of the congregation.

In time, however, his views were laid open, as he attempted to hold separate assemblies. Marcian then found his error in ordaining so ambitious a person, and often said in his grief, that he wished he had laid hands on thoma rather than on Sabbatius. He took measures, however, to disappoint his ambition. Calling a council, he sent for Sabbatius, and desired him to lay open the reasons of his disgust. The man informed them, that the difference of opinion concerning Easter was his grievance, as he thought that festival ought to be observed according to the rule of the synod of Paza. The bishops, suspecting his episcopal views, obliged him to swear, that he would not attempt to become a bishop, and then decreed, that the time of observing Easter should be left indifferent, and that no schism should be made in the church on that account. Their design of preserving unity was laudable; but it succeeded not. Sabbatius drew over a number of the simpler sort, and particularly those of Phrygia and Galatia to his own Jewish mode, and got himself appointed bishop of his followers in contradiction to his oath. The consequence was, a variety of divisions among the Novatians concerning the time of Easter and other frivolous subjects, and the crumbling of this church into contentious parties of different kinds.

Little can be said on this subject, but what must occur to the mind of a thinking reader. This most respectable of all the dissenting churches seems to have preserved, for a considerable time, a strictness and purity of discipline and manners; but its essential characteristic of narrow bigotry, in things of no moment, gave occasion to internal divisions among its own members, which, fomented by unprincipled persons, must have perverted them much from the simplicity of the gospel.

Monasticism continued to make a rapid progress through this whole century. It is not worth while to trace its progress particularly, nor to recite any of the ridiculous frauds, abuses, and superstitions, which were connected with it. Self-righteous formality made rapid strides in the Christian world; one single observation, however, of an author, who has recorded much of this trash with great complacency, will deserve to be transcribed. "Most of these famous monks, says Sozomen, lived to extreme old age; and I think that this was a mean of facilitating the progress of Christianity. Antioch excepted, Syria was very late in receiving the Gospel, and these monks were highly instrumental in the work, both in that country, and among the Persians and Saracena." That these countries, which were before, for

* Excerpt. Philostorgii apud Photium.

^a Socrates, B. IV. c. 28.

^b Ibid. B. V. c. 21.

the most part, void of the doctrine of Christ, might receive spiritual advantage from these superstitious men, is probable, because some genuine piety was doubtless among them. That Galatia and Cappadocia, which had long before been full of the best Christians should do so, I very much doubt.^c Superstition drawing with it something of real Christianity may bring a blessing to countries altogether profane or idolatrous; to a people already well evangelised, it can only act as a poison.

CHAPTER XX.

CHRISTIAN AUTHORS IN THIS CENTURY.

THERE were several persons of the name of Macarius who lived much about the same time. Hence it is as difficult, as it would be uninteresting to determine to which of them the fifty homilies yet extant belong. Their antiquity is doubtless great, and they give no small specimen of the divinity of the times. These are a few of the favourite thoughts of Macarius.

"Though a man be improved in virtue, he ought to look on himself as one who has done nothing, and should press forward to greater degrees, lest he lose the Holy Spirit by pride or sloth.—Man is capable of falling from that state of holiness in which he is, unless he preserve himself in it by humility, which is the infallible mark of a Christian.—Those who have not yet received grace, ought to do good and forsake evil by natural motives; but those who have received it, being possessed of love, need not such motives. He thinks, that men may fall away after the highest attainments, and that it is impossible for any to be certain of his salvation in this life. He observes, that to grow in grace without humility is impossible; that the soul after death goes immediately to that place, on which its love was fixed in this life; that whatever good a man does by natural strength, can never save him without the grace of Jesus Christ; that if the Holy Spirit does not produce in us the love of God, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. He is fond of shewing, that we ought always so to labour, as if all depended on our own endeavours, and yet to acknowledge that we can do nothing without God."^d

Certainly a serious and humble spirit runs through these homilies, and they seem to have been written by a man earnestly engaged in the divine life, and sensible of the need of divine grace. With such dim kind of light many humble souls, in the dark ages, groped in their way safe to the heavenly kingdom,

though, like Macarius, poorly furnished with evangelical views and doctrines. These men saw and felt, however, the necessity of conversion, and the importance of a principle of divine love, and hence their obscure light deserves to be called mid-day, compared with the darkness of those, who put mere natural light in the room of the Holy Ghost, and moral virtue in the room of divine charity.

Victorinus of Africa had professed rhetoric many years at Rome, and was held in such high reputation, that a public statue was erected to his honour in the city. In his old age, however, he was converted, and was not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ in public. An animated and instructive account of this is given by Augustine in his confessions, which may meet us hereafter. At present, we are to view him as an author. He wrote against the Arians and the Manichees. In his treatise against the latter, he addresses his friend Justinus, who had been deceived by them, in this manner: "In vain do you macerate yourself with excessive mortifications; for after you have worn away yourself by your austerities, your flesh will return to the devil in darkness. I advise you to acknowledge, that God Almighty created you, that you may be truly the temple of God, according to the words of the Apostle, 'you are the temple of God, and his spirit dwelleth in you.' If you have not the honour to be the temple of God, and to receive the Holy Spirit in you, Jesus Christ is come, not to save, but to destroy you."^e

The spirit of godliness, unquestionably, possessed this man; but his writings are, at present at least, very little interesting; though the passage I have quoted shews his holy taste. It were to be wished, that instead of subtilizing intricate controversies, he had favoured posterity with a plain view of the Lord's dealings with his own soul, which must, in a conversion so extraordinary as his, have been very instructive, and for which he must have been far more competent, than for theological theories. But the humour of philosophical refinement guided far too much the best writers of these times, even such as Victorinus, who, being converted in his old age, was, probably, never well qualified to expound the Scriptures. If the reader regret how little of experimental divinity is laid before him, I join with his complaint, but my materials suffer and not to apply a remedy.

Pacianus bishop of Barcelona in Spain, was a man renowned both for piety and eloquence. Like most of this age, he exalts too much the forms of the church, and the dignity of the priesthood. Yet a strain of holy fervour seems to pervade his writings, and he combats the peculiar error of inflexible severity in the Novatians with just ar-

^c See *Saomien*, B. VI. c. 34.

^d *Du Pin*, Cent. IV. *Macarii*.

^e *Du Pin*, Cent. IV. *Victorinus*.

gument and charitable sentiments. "If man be subject to these miseries (of sinning away his privileges) let us no more accuse the mercy of God, who has proposed these remedies to our diseases, let us no more efface the titles of God's clemency by an insupportable rigour, nor hinder sinners, by an inflexible hardness, from rejoicing in those gifts, which God has bestowed upon them."

This is doubtless right; but when he excludes the Novatians from any part in the blessings of the church, because of their schism, he doubtless falls into uncharitable bigotry, in which both churchmen and Dissenters too much abounded; though, I apprehend, in obscure regions this evil more prevailed. We have seen, in what Christian charity the general church and Novatians could live in the great city of Constantineople.

Optatus bishop of Meleui in Numidia, deserves a place in these memoirs, for his judicious and able treatise against the Donatists. Of him, as of many other sensible writers, IT IS TO BE REGRETTED, that he had not a more useful subject. The case of the Donatists I shall reserve to the time of Augustine, whose character and conduct are much connected with the history of these Dissenters. Of course, I have little to say of Optatus's writings. A serious spirit appears in them, and a single passage, which is introduced, in the way of digression, contains matter so truly Christian, that the reader will think it worth our attention; as it demonstrates, that evangelical truth was far from being lost as yet, amidst the thick mists of superstition, that the true resting place of the soul in the doctrine of justification by Jesus Christ, the true humility, and real plan of sanctification, were understood, in some degree at least, by this author. Rebuking the pride of the Donatists, who boasted themselves to be holy and innocent, he says, "Whence comes this sanctity of yours, which the Apostle St. John dared not to attribute to himself, seeing he says, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. He who speaks after this manner, WISELY REFERS HIMSELF TO THE MERCY OF GOD; for, a Christian may desire good, and endeavour to walk in the way of salvation; but he cannot be perfect of himself. For though he does run, yet there will always remain something to be done by God to perfect him; and it is necessary that God should help a man in his weakness; for he is perfection, and there never was any but Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was perfect. All other men are imperfect. It belongs to us to will and to run, but God only can give perfect perfection. Jesus Christ has not given us perfect holiness, but has only promised it."²

The Apollinarii, father and son, were of Laodicea, the father a presbyter, the son a reader in the church. Both skilled in Greek literature, the father taught grammar, the son rhetoric. Epiphanius, a sophist, was united with them in the closest intimacy. Theodotus, bishop of Laodicea, very properly fearing that the connection with a Pagan might endanger their souls, advised them to give up his acquaintance. They despised the advice, and persisted. George, the successor of Theodotus, afterward attempting in vain the same thing, expelled them, at length, from Christian communion. Incensed at this, they set up a new sect, known by the name of the Apollinarian heresy, the principal mark of which is, that it ascertains precisely one point of the Arian creed, by denying to our Saviour a human soul, and supposing the inferior divine nature, which he had from the Father, to supply its place.³

These men were doubtless persons of superior capacity. The son, particularly, was one of the greatest men of his time, in learning, genius and powers of argument. His answer to Porphyry is looked on as the best defence of Christianity against Paganism. He it was, who, in Julian's time, endeavoured to compensate to the Christian world the loss of the classical authors, from the study of whom they were debarred by the persecution of that emperor. He wrote poems and dialogues in imitation of Sophocles and Plato on scriptural subjects. His translation of the Psalms into Greek verse, which remains to this day, is highly commended.¹

What was wanting in these men? Humility. There have been persons in later times, like them, of good moral characters, learned, acute, industrious, far surpassing many real saints, in capacity, and in usefulness too, so far as the externals of religion are concerned. Pride and self-confidence lead such men to speculate, where they ought to adore; to dispute where they ought to pray; and to blaspheme, where they ought to submit. They treat with scorn the charitable admonitions of their pastors and godly friends, because they know languages and sciences better than their reprovers. Strangers to themselves, and to the whole work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, and resisting all his godly motions, they cannot come to Christ, because they are unwilling to descend from their prodigious altitude into the valley of humiliation. Ambition in them must be fed; disappointed in the church of Christ, they invent corrupt refinements, and seek to become heads of a party. He who knows, that God taketh the wise in their craftiness, and revealeth himself to babes, will not stumble at such cases; and those few in all ages, who stand superior to the

¹ Du Pin, Cent. IV. Pacianus.
² Du Pin, Cent. IV. Optatus.

³ Socrates, B. II. c. 46.

¹ Du Pin.

rest of mankind in talents, and yet love genuine godliness, are only secured and hedged in by the divine goodness, through a charitable course of discipline, often more severe, than is needful for other Christians.

Didymus of Alexandria, may be fairly matched with Apollinarius, in greatness of understanding and accomplishments; though he lost his sight at the age of five years, he became so vigorous and successful a student, that he was renowned for his skill in philosophy, rhetoric and geometry. He filled the chair of the famous school of Alexandria with vast applause. Origenism was his favourite system, though, as far as appears, he continued always sound, and I hope, humble and holy, in Christian doctrine. His treatise on the Holy Spirit, the Latin translation of which by Jerome, has only come down to us, is perhaps the best the Christian world ever saw on the subject. And whatever has been said, since that time, in defence of the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, seems, in substance, to be found in that book.

Gregory Nyssen, brother of the famous Basil, was the bishop of Nyssa, a city of Cappadocia Basil, and two of his brothers, embraced a solitary life; but Gregory married and lived in society. Under Valens, he was faithful, and had the honour to be expelled from his church. In the year 378, he was restored. He died toward the end of the century. In a catechetical discourse, he shews a sound judgment in laying down different rules of argumentation with Pagans, Jews and Heretics. To defend the incarnation of God, he shews that man is fallen, and corrupted, and can be recovered only by his Creator; and hence, that the Word who created him came himself to raise him again. He shews also, that to be born of a virgin, to eat, to drink, to die, and to be buried, are not things unbecoming the holy nature of God, because there is no sin in them; and that the divinity, united to man, lost not its perfections, any more than the soul loses its properties by its union with the body.

Once visiting Jerusalem, he was hospitably received by three religious ladies of note there, Eustathia, Ambrosia, and Basilissa, and contemplated with delight the scenes of our Lord's abode on earth. But he tells us, that he found there little of true religion, and returned sorrowful to Antioch, whence he wrote to the three ladies, and cautioned them against being imposed on by those, who desired to make a prey of them. Being asked by a friend, whether it was an essential part of religion to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he answered in the negative, and that a man had more reason to expect the Spirit of God in Cappadocia, where true piety prevailed, than at Jerusalem, where, it seems, religion was run to a very low ebb. Thus

much for Gregory Nyssen, whose piety at least deserves our regard, though as an author, he is in no very high estimation.^b

CHAPTER XXI.

EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN.

SOME other persons, who lived in this century, will, on several accounts, deserve a more distinct attention. I shall begin with Ephraim the Syrian, who was born at Nisibis in Mesopotamia, of Christian parents, and was educated with great care from his infancy. His turn of mind from childhood was devout, studious, and contemplative, to an extreme degree. And as few persons in that age, knew how to unite the real Christian life with the practice of all the duties of society, it is not to be wondered at, that the solitary taste prevailed much in Ephraim. It is rather a proof of uncommon good sense or charity, or of both, that at length he^c could be induced to quit his solitude, and live in the great city of Edessa, for the sake of enjoying the benefit of Christian assemblies, and of rendering himself useful to his fellow-creatures. He wrote much on the Scriptures, and various devotional Pieces, in the Syriac, his native tongue; which in his own lifetime were translated into Greek, and were much admired by all the eastern churches. He never was advanced farther in the ecclesiastical state, than to the office of deacon, and once, he took a very extraordinary method to avoid being preferred to the office of a bishop. He feigned madness, and escaped; the reader will recollect something similar in the conduct of Ambrose, and may take occasion to lament the unhappy extremes of opposite kinds, which in different ages have disfigured the church. In Ephraim's days, the pastoral character appeared to good men, awful beyond measure, requiring little less than angelical virtue. In our days, is not convenience and love of gain the principal motive, and decency of character the principal qualification?

One Harmonius, the son of Bardesanes, a noted heretic, industriously employed himself in composing religious hymns for the use of the Syrians, in which, he interspersed his father's heretical notions, and the philosophy of the Greeks. Ephraim, whose views of the fundamentals of Christian faith, were strictly sound, and to whom the faith of the gospel was precious, made himself master of the measures and tunes, and, in the use of them, composed Christian hymns, which were well received by the Syrians, and sung to the same tunes as those of Harmonius.

^a Du Pin. Cave.

^b Sozom. B. III. c. 16.

He wrote also a discourse on the utility of psalmody, and exploded idle songs and dancing. Let this be regarded as a proof of his zeal and industry. Not long before his death, he gave an instance of charity that deserves to be recorded. A severe famine raged in Edessa, and many indigent persons died for want. He waited sometime to see,^m if any would step forth to relieve them; but finding little appearance of this, the compassion of his heart at length broke through all the unhappy monastic restraints, by which, even in Edessa, he had precluded himself from doing much good to the church; and going among the rich and wealthy, he vehemently reproved their inhumanity. They did, what persons of the same character do in all ages; they cleared themselves of avarice, but excused themselves, on account of the difficulty of finding a proper person, whose discretion and fidelity might be trusted in the distribution of their alms. Do you think me competent to this office, replied Ephraim? All owned it without hesitation. "Then I will undertake it." Receiving their contributions, he caused three hundred beds to be brought into the public cloisters of the city, and the infirm to be placed on them, and he furnished them both with food and medicine. He took care also of strangers, and of those, whom want had driven out of the country, and provided them all with necessary accommodations, till the dearth was abated.

How much is it to be regretted, that mistaken ideas of piety, into which young converts are very apt to fall, should have deprived the Christian world of so much benefit, as might have arisen from the talents and virtues of Ephraim! In this occasional sally, we see the outlines of a GENERAL INFERMARY, drawn and brought into practice, by a monk! That men, who mix with the world continually, should be covetous and selfish, will surprise no man, who knows human depravity. And what advantage did Satan gain, in these times, when the best and most excellent men hid themselves from the world, and as much as possible attended only to the cultivation of private virtues? A strong proof, this, of the low and reduced state of Christian knowledge! And as I know nothing more worth recording of the life of Ephraim, let us take a short view of his writings, in order to discover, if we can, the spirit of his religion. If I mistake not, we may see, by a few quotations, which will serve instead of many, in a case, where the character is exceedingly uniform, that his love was much greater than his light, and that few men were better furnished and prepared for the very best use of evangelical consolation, if the theology of his time had afforded him easy access to it.

^m Sozom. *ibid.*

Speaking of love, he says, "Blessed is the man who possesses love, and with it departs to God; for he, knowing his own, will receive him into his bosom; he shall be a companion of angels, and reign with Christ. By love, God the Word, came upon earth; by it, paradise has been opened to us, and an entrance has been shewn to all into heaven. Being enemies to God, by love we were reconciled. We may justly say, that God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God."ⁿ

Hear him mourn over himself, and judge what a sense he had of natural depravity. "From my childhood I have been a vessel unprofitable and dishonourable. Warning others, I have fallen myself into their evil twofold. Woe is me!—whence can there be any refuge, unless the mercies of God shine quickly upon me, nor is there one hope of salvation from works. While I speak of purity, I am thinking of uncleanness. While I am uttering rules for the conquest of the passions, my own are inwardly raging night and day. What excuse can I make? Alas! what a scrutiny must I undergo. I have had the form, without the power of godliness. I fear, lest fire from heaven should consume me, as it did the two sons of Aaron. Shall I then despair of salvation? By no means: this the adversary desires, in order to destroy me. I do not throw away myself; for I confide in the mercies of God, and your prayers for me.—I pray thee, cast me not away. Thou knowest the wounds of my soul; heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed.—What shame will seize me, when those, who now count me holy, shall see me condemned, and when all secrets shall be laid open!"^o

However defective his views of evangelical doctrine were, his ideas of that humility, which enters into the essence of the experience of them, are just and deep. "Vain, says he, is every endowment without humility.—Pride labours to domineer over all, and lays a snare for every one in that way which is peculiar to each. The wise, the strong, the beautiful, the ingenious, are each exposed to danger from that in which they excel. The Lord, knowing our danger, hath set humility as our guard, saying, "When ye have done all, say we are unprofitable servants." Do those who labour abundantly in the ministry, glory over those of a more still and quiet turn? behold, the Lord commends Mary sitting at his feet, as having chosen the good portion. Are the sedate inclined to glory over the active? behold, the Son of man came to minister.—To be lifted up is to have a fleshly mind; and if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.—When thou canst bear grievous things, against thy

ⁿ Ephraim's Works. Oxon. 1714. 16.

will, yet willingly, know that thou hast made proficiency in humility.—Through pride the Pharisee was condemned; through humility the Publican was exalted; with whom may the Lord deign to rank us in his kingdom with all the just.”

Observe, how divinely he exhorts us; though his manner of speaking evinces his ignorance of the true distinction between moral and natural inability. “He might have healed all the wounds of our souls, and compelled us violently to goodness; but he does not choose that method, that our choice may have its praise. Do we neglect to call for his help, when he loves and pities us? Hath he redeemed and enlightened us? He hath given us to see and taste of his grace; that we might seek him without ceasing. Happy he, who hath tasted of his love, and prepared himself to be always filled with it. Filled with this love, he admits no other. Who would not love such a master, worship him, and confess his goodness?—From his immense height and the blessed bosom of the Father did he not descend to us? The invisible became visible—O, wonder, full of fear and trembling! A hand of clay, formed of the dust, smote the Creator of heaven and earth; and we, poor dust and ashes, cannot bear the contradiction of a word—What wilt thou say to him in that day?”

Speaking of the day of judgment, he says, an innumerable multitude go round about, seeking each his own bones, and being raised, they all cry, “Glory to Him who hath raised us and gathered us together by his loving-kindness. Blessed is he, who shall be counted worthy to see that hour, in which all that loved the immortal Bridegroom are taken up into the clouds to meet him.—I remembered the day, and trembled, and groaning wept, till I had no more power to weep—My days have passed on, and my iniquities have been multiplied. Woe is me, my beloved. What shall I do in the shame of that hour, when my friends, who now see and bless me in this garb of piety, may behold me full of iniquity within.—O gracious Lover of souls, by thy compassions I conjure thee, place me not at the left hand with the goats; but by thy kindness, I implore thee, give me a contrite spirit, and purify me, that I may be a temple of thy grace. Sinner as I am, I knock at thy door without ceasing; although though I be, yet I walk in thy way.”

Will the reader hear the devotion of this broken-hearted saint? “I beseech thy goodness, heal my wounds, and enlighten my understanding, that I may see thy gracious dispensations towards me. When my heart is infatuated, let the salt of thy grace season it.—Thou alone knowest, how my

soul thirsts after thee, as a dry land.—As thou hast ever heard me, neglect not now my petition: my mind is as a captive, yet seeking thee, the only true Saviour. Send thy grace, that I may eat and drink, and be satisfied.—Distil one drop of thy love, that it may burn as liquid fire in my soul, and consume its thorns, even evil lusts.”

Were I to quote the very strong description, which he gives of his own sinfulness, persons unacquainted with the power of indwelling-sin might suspect, that this man, who was remarkably strict and circumspect in his manners from youth, must have been a man of gross wickedness. For similar reasons, St. Paul, on account of the strong description of his internal corruption in the seventh chapter to the Romans, has been thought to have been speaking only of his life before conversion, though he evidently speaks of himself at the time of writing. It was deep humility of soul, and a large acquaintance with the propensity of the natural heart itself, which led both of them to describe themselves as so very evil. The difference is, that Ephraim's inferior knowledge of gospel-grace prevented his attainment of that strength and joy, in which the Apostle abounded. Yet his faith, clouded as the grounds of it were, was sound. “I know that the multitude of his mercies exceeds the multitude of my sins.—In baptism he hath given me remission of sins; yet I need to be healed of sins committed after baptism; but he who raised the dead is able to heal me also.” Is not this the very frame of an humbled soul, bowed down with indwelling-corruption? “I desire to rise, but I cannot: the weight of sin presses me down. I see, but I walk in much darkness. I move my hand, but I am as a paralytic.”

In his last will and testament, his humility appears, mixed with superstition, and dejection of spirit. A mind like his, truly sensible of sin, and not fully and steadily discerning the Lord Jesus, its only righteousness, will flee to vain refuges. Thus Ephraim has some recourse to prayers and offerings made for him after his decease. And the value of clear Christian light hence appears inexpressible.”

His reverence toward the blessed God appears in a book which he wrote against those, who would search out the nature of the Son of God. In the second chapter,* he says, “Unhappy, miserable, and most impudent is he, who desires to search out his Maker. Innumerable myriads of angels glorify with reverence, and trembling adore, while men of clay, full of sins, dispute without fear, concerning the Divinity. Their body trem-

* M.C.

* T.E.

* See Dr. Owen's Preface to his *Exercitationes*.

bles not, their mind is not disconcerted : but secure and loquacious, they speak of Christ the Son of God, who suffered for me an unworthy sinner, and of his two-fold generation, nor do they feel how blind they are in the light."

The remarks which might be made on this holy man have been anticipated for the most part. Undoubtedly, the best state of Christianity is that of a Saint, humbled under a sense of sin all his days, yet rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and bringing forth fruit with charity and patience. This requires an evangelical knowledge, both of the law, and of the gospel. And an experimental acquaintance with this science is generally very simple and strong, in both its parts, under the effusion of the Holy Spirit. On the declension of this, toward the latter end of the third century, a lower form of Christianity, even in real saints, obtained, and our history is still travelling through the twilight. The taste of this lower form was to know the law in its spirituality, but not the gospel in its consolations. Of this form was Ephraim, one of the most holy men in this period, and I scarce have found a saint, who had better views, since the days of Cyprian, unless we except Ambrose of Milan. But by far the greater part of real good men, in this whole century, and the latter part of the last, lived, comparatively, in bondage, looking to Jesus, sincerely, though confusedly. One person, however, was training up under the special guidance of God in the latter part of this century, whose superior light was appointed to illuminate the next, as we shall see by and by. But how does the piety, the humility, the conscientiousness of such men as Ephraim, with all their abject superstition, rebuke the pride and carelessness and levity of many now evangelized in the head, and not in heart, who trifle with the light, and live in sin, because they conceive grace to abound?

I shall dismiss this Saint, after I have taken a little notice of one of his companions named Abraham, whose life he has written, and whom he admires extremely. For fifty years, he lived an Ascetic, in the strictest observation of monastic rules, and confined himself principally to his cell; though the intelligent reader will think he acted most like a Christian in those intervals, when he left it; in one of them particularly, to which alone I shall confine my attention. There was a great desert in the neighbourhood of the city, (Edessa I suppose,) in which, the inhabitants were all idolaters to a man;⁷ and though many presbyters and deacons had been sent to them by the bishop of the city, yet they had all returned without effect, unable to bear the persecution of the Pagans. One day, the bishop observed among his clergy, that he knew of no person so devoted to God as

Abraham, and therefore he would ordain him as an evangelist of these Pagans. At first he intreated him, but in vain; Abraham begged to be permitted to bemoan his own evils. The bishop, however, insisting on the obedience which he owed to authority, and how much better it was to be employed in the salvation of many, than of one soul only, Abraham at length submitted. He began his work with fervent prayer for the divine blessing, and having erected a church, he supplicated in it, for the conversion of the people. His next step appears not so proper; he threw down the idols and altars of the Pagans; the consequence of which was, that, with much ill usage, he was expelled from the country. He returned, however, to the village, and resumed his work of prayer in the church, to the astonishment of the Pagans; who coming from time to time to him, he began to exhort them to turn from idols to the living God, on which he was worse treated than before. For three years, he bore their insults, and a constant series of persecution. His patience, however, and meekness, were admirable, and at length the people began to be softened, and comparing his preaching with his practice, they concluded that God must be with him, and offered themselves voluntarily to receive his doctrine. The Saint, rejoicing at the event, desired them to give glory to God, who had enlightened the eyes of their hearts to know him. In fine, he gathered them into a church, daily opening to them the Scriptures. At length, when he saw them confirmed in the faith of the gospel, and bringing forth the fruits of it with steadiness, he abruptly retired from them to his former solitude. The work, however, remained firm and strong, and the bishop visited and exhorted them, from the word of God, and ordained pastors from among themselves.

How much better would Abraham have been thus employed during the fifty years of his solitude? but such were the times. While the world proceeded in its usual wickedness, those who were best calculated to reform it, had a strong tendency to live a recluse life; and false fear and bondage kept many from the pastoral office, who might have been its brightest ornaments. The mischief of this was inexpressible; the extension of the gospel was checked; and every circumstance shewed, that the spirit of God was no longer poured out, in his fulness, among men.

CHAPTER XXII.

HILARY OF POICTIERS.

AN account of the life of Hilary is delivered by one Fortunatus, who wrote about two hun-

dred years after him. This biographer, according to the taste of the age, which was still more credulous and superstitious than that of Hilary, is extremely barren in matters, which really deserve attention, and is full of prodigies and fictions. The best account of him therefore is to be drawn from his contemporaries, and the ecclesiastical historians, and above all from his own writings. Of his life and actions little is known that deserves to be recorded: yet so great a man merited a distinct attention.

He was born at Poitiers in France, and being of a very noble family, and distinguished by a liberal education, he was enabled to throw a lustre on Christianity, after he received it. In his book on the Trinity he gives us some account of his conversion.^a He seriously considered the folly and vanity of idolatry, and was led to conclude, that its professors could not possibly be competent to lead men to happiness. He contemplated the visible frame of things, and inferred an Omnipotent Eternal Being, as their Maker and Preserver. He observes, that happiness consists not in any external things, nor in the bare knowledge of the first principles of good and evil, but in the knowledge of the true God. By reading the books of Moses and the prophets, he found his mind enlightened and his judgment confirmed in these ideas.^b The short, but comprehensive account of God, in the book of Exodus, "I am that I am," affected him with admiration. When he was carried forward to the New Testament, there he learnt, that there is an eternal Word, the Son of God made man, who came into the world, to communicate to it the fulness of grace. His hope of happiness was now enlarged: "since the Son of God was made man, men may become the sons of God. A man, who with gladness receives this doctrine, renews his spirit by faith, and conceives a hope full of immortality. Having once learned to believe, he rejects the captious difficulties, and no longer judges after the maxims of the world. He now neither fears death, nor is weary of life, and presses forward to a state of a blessed immortality." In such a manner, does Hilary give us the history of his own mind in religion. And when he enters on the subject of the Trinity, he gives an excellent admonition; humility at least will think so, though pride will object to it. It is, that the reader would think of God according to the light of faith, and agreeably to the testimony of God himself, divesting his mind of the meanness of human opinions. "For the chief qualification required in a reader is, that he be willing to take the sense of an Author from what he reads, and not give him one of his own. He ought not to endeavour to find, in the passages which he

reads, that, which he presumed ought to be there. In such passages, as describe the character of the Supreme Being particularly, he ought at least to be persuaded, that God knew himself."^c And in another part of the same treatise, he makes this observation: "The blasphemies of the heretics oblige us to do those things which are forbidden us, to search into mysteries incomprehensible, to speak things ineffable, and to explain that which we are not permitted to examine. And instead of performing with a sincere faith that which is commanded us, (which were otherwise sufficient) namely, to worship the Father and the Son, and to be filled with the Spirit, we are obliged to employ our weak reasonings in explaining things incomprehensible." Every sincere believer, in every age, has had occasion to make the same remark, when called to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

His views of the Three Persons in the Trinity are remarkably perspicuous and scriptural. In speaking of the Holy Spirit, he says, that he enlightens our understandings and warms our hearts,^d that he is the author of all grace, and will be with us to the end of the world; that he is our comforter here while we live in expectation of a future life, the earnest of our hopes, the light of our minds, and the warmth of our souls. He directs us to pray for this Holy Spirit, to enable us to do good, and to persevere in faith and obedience.

There will be no occasion to take any farther notice of his writings, unless it be to mention his addresses to the emperor on the same subject. Two he wrote with decency and moderation; in the third, he appears, evidently, to smart under the wounds of persecution, and treats the prince with an unchristian asperity, for which no other apology can be made, than the same which must be made for Athanasius, namely, "that oppression maketh a wise man mad." In general, there is a proportion preserved in the church between doctrinal light and holy practice. Sanctification is carried on by the knowledge of the truth. And the superior degree of that knowledge, in the first and second century, will account for the superior degree of Christian meekness and charity, in those, who suffered for the gospel, compared with the practice of the saints of the fourth century.

Hilary, after his conversion, was singularly exemplary in his attachment to the Gos-

^a I apprehend, if this method had been followed in all ages, there never would have been found any one to oppose the doctrine of the Trinity. Agreeably to this, it appears that Hilary, by the study of the Scriptures alone, had obtained and steadily professed the Nicene faith, before he had ever seen the creed of that name, or knew any thing of the Arian Controversy.

^b Thus owing his influence on the two leading powers of the human mind, the understanding, and the will; not on one alone, but on both, agreeably to the views of the best and wisest in all ages.

^c See Cave's Life of Hilary.

^d Du Pin.

pel, avoiding any appearance of countenancing the fashionable heresies, and employing himself in recommending his religion to others. He was married, and had by his wife a daughter called Abra, whose education he superintended with great exactness. The gradual progress of superstition may be remarked from his case. He certainly cohabited with his wife after he was appointed bishop of Poitiers, and yet he strongly recommended his daughter to devote herself wholly to the service of Christ by a state of virginity. To relate his active employment in the Arian controversy, would be again to introduce a subject, with which the reader has been already satiated. Suffice it to say, that he spent some time in banishment, in Phrygia, for the sake of a good conscience, that he was at length restored to his See, and that by his lenity on the one hand, which provoked the Luciferians, and by his constancy on the other, which offended the Arian emperor, he was yet enabled to be of signal service to the church, and was to the West, what Athanasius was to the East, the pillar of orthodoxy. The Latin church indeed was never so much infested with Arianism as the Greek; and France, in particular, was through him preserved from the reigning heresy. He died at Poitiers about the year 368. To him the great church at Poitiers is dedicated, and in the midst of the city, is a column erected to him, with an inscription, at once expressive of the admiration of his virtues, and of the superstition of those who wrote it.^c

CHAPTER XXIII.

BASIL OF CÆSAREA.^d

BASIL, surnamed the Great, on account of his learning and piety, was descended from Christian ancestors, who suffered much during the Dioclesian persecution. His grandmother Macrina, herself a confessor for the faith of Christ, and a disciple of Gregory Thaumaturgus, was eminently useful to him, in superintending his education, and fixing his principles. After a strict domestic education in Cappadocia, his native country, he travelled for improvement in knowledge, according to the custom of those, whose circumstances enabled them to bear the ex-

pense, and came to Athens. Here he met with Gregory Nazianzen, with whom he had a very cordial intimacy. At length, leaving him there, he came to Constantinople, and put himself under the care of the famous Libanius. It is certain, that he was possessed of all the secular learning of the age, and if he had chosen to give himself wholly to the world, he might have shone as much, as superior parts, strong understanding, and indefatigable industry, united, can effect. But his mind was under a spiritual influence; he found an emptiness in the most refined enjoyments of literature; even Athens itself, he called a vain felicity. He was led to seek for food for his soul, and in conjunction with Gregory, he studied the works of Origen; and some monuments of their veneration for that learned father are still extant.^e

It will scarce be needful to add, that, by this means, he contracted a taste for exposition, neither the most evangelical nor the most perspicuous. In his travels into Egypt, he conversed with monks and hermits, and prepared himself for that excessive attachment to the spirit of Ascetics, which afterwards made him the great supporter and encourager of those superstitions.

It is my duty, however, to look for the spouse of Christ, wherever I can find her, although she may be disguised by an unsuitable and foreign garb. Julian the apostate had known him, when they studied together at Athens, and being now advanced to the empire, he invited Basil to his court. But the fear of God, and the love of heavenly things, which undoubtedly predominated in the latter, suffered him not to give way to the temptation for a moment. He wrote with Christian sincerity to the emperor, and provoked him by his faithful rebukes; choosing rather to live in Cæsarea a despised Christian, than to share in the honours and riches of the court, to which his uncommon endowments and abilities would have advanced him.

After some time, he lived in retirement at Neocæsarea in Pontus, and by his example, concurring with the spirit of the times, he not only drew over his friend Gregory, but also great numbers, to embrace a retired life, and to employ themselves in prayer, singing of psalms, and devotional exercises. And here, these two friends formed the rules of monastic discipline, which were the basis of all those superstitious institutions, which afterwards overran the church. The want of a more evangelical view of doctrine, and of course, of that lively faith which would animate and enable the Christian to live above the world, though in the midst of

^c Divo Hilario, Orbis propugnatori, fidelissimo, assiduisimo, certissimo, Pictavorum Episcopo.

^d To Saint Hilary, the defender of the city, most faithful, assiduous, and certain, the bishop of Poitiers.

^e The epistles of Basil still extant, with the writings of his friend Gregory Nazianzen, and the two historians, Socrates and Sozomen, afford materials sufficiently ample for his life. Cave has given us a connected view of his actions, and Du Pin has reviewed his letters.

^e Viz. The Philocalia of Origen, consisting of Scriptural questions, and Origen's comments, which these two friends compiled.

it, was, doubtless, the principal cause of the overflowing of this spirit among real good men in these times. To flee from society seemed to them the only possible way to escape the pollutions of the world, which they sincerely abhorred. Self-righteousness and ignorance fomented the evil, which, at length, became a rapid system of formality, and degenerated gradually into a sink of secret wickedness. But he, who should, in these times, suspect the generality of monks of hypocrisy and profligacy, would injure them much. On the contrary, the flower of the flock of Christ, in these days, is to be looked for among them.

If Basil was employed in founding monasteries in the neighbouring parts, he also caused hospitals to be erected for the poor, and as he had been ordained priest before he left Cæsarea, he was useful in preaching up and down the country.

Returning, after a time, to Cæsarea, he distinguished himself by inducing the rich to supply the necessities of the poor during a grievous famine; and all the world gave him credit both for his charity in relieving the distressed, and for his integrity in resisting the importunities of Valens the Arian emperor.

The See of Cæsarea being vacant, the authority of the aged Gregory, bishop of Nazianzum, the father of his friend, was sincerely exerted for his promotion; and to this See he was at length advanced, notwithstanding the opposition of the Arians. He was soon called to withstand the repeated attacks of Valens, and though he was in the utmost danger of being banished from his See, he remained immoveable in the profession of the faith.

Let us attend a little to the pastoral character of Basil. He found, that the church of Cæsarea, before his time, had been scandalously neglected in its discipline. Church-officers, who were a disgrace to religion, ministered; and the country-bishops¹ ordained men without the knowledge of the bishop, and without any just examination; and many pressed into the ministry for secular reasons: it was reported, that some were even guilty of selling the priesthood for money, the crime usually known by the name of Simony. Basil reminded his clergy of the strictness of the primitive discipline, and of the care formerly exercised by the presbyters and deacons in examining the lives and manners of the persons to be ordained; and he made earnest attempts to revive the laudable customs, inveighing against Simony as most detestable.

It would be tedious to describe the diverse contests in which Basil was engaged. Calumny, malice, and the domineering power

of Arianism afflicted him with various trials, in which his patience was unwearied, and as his body became enfeebled by increasing distempers, his mind seems to have collected more vigour. Finding himself rapidly declining, after he had governed the church of Cæsarea eight years and some months, he ordained some of his followers, and then was obliged to take to his bed. The people flocked about his house, sensible of the value of such a pastor. He discoursed piously to those, who were about him for a time, and sealed his last breath with the ejaculation, "Into thine hands I commend my spirit."

It is much to be lamented, that a man so sincerely pious, so profoundly learned, and of so elegant and accomplished a genius, should have suffered so much, both in mind and body from the monastic spirit. But his excessive austerities broke his constitution, and left him for years in a very imperfect state of health. He died in the year 379.

His doctrine appears, from his works, to be too much clouded with self-righteous and superstitious mixtures, to contribute materially to the instruction and the consolation of sincere souls, though it is evident, that he revered the influences of the Holy Spirit, and placed his hope of salvation in Christ Jesus. Hear how Basil speaks of faith.

"Faith draws the soul to a firm acquiescence in the word, above all natural methods: Faith, which is the effect, not of geometrical conclusions, but the result of the energy of the Spirit." So clearly spiritual was his religion, with all its imperfections!² To this testimony of Basil concerning divine faith, as distinct from that which is merely natural, it may be proper to add that of Nemes de homine, c. 2. another Greek father, whose time seems not far remote from Basil's. "The doctrine of the divine oracles hath its credibility from itself, because of its divine inspiration. On one subject, namely, the love of heavenly things in opposition to earthly, he excelled, both in precept and example. In this, the power of grace appeared in the man through life, and even the whole system of his errors in divinity was connected with it. The very principle of the Ascetic life was to him, a supreme desire to live above the world. Those who understand the foundation of the gospel better than Basil did, may find it not amiss to attend to such pathetic exhortations as these:

"One says,³ I will give to-morrow, to excuse himself from giving to-day. Alas! do you know whether you shall be alive to-morrow in this place? Another says, I am poor, I have need enough myself of all my means. Yes, you are poor, you are destitute, but it is of love, of benignity, of faith, and of mercy. A third says, whom do I wrong? I

¹ Chorepiscopi. A sort of under-Bishops in great districts.

² Basil on Psalm cxv.

³ Basil's Homilies. Du Pin.

keep only my own. I ask you, from whom did you receive those riches, and whence did you bring them? Did you not come naked from your mother's womb, and shall you not return naked to the dust? Whence did this wealth come? from chance? What is this but Atheism? if you confess, that you received it from God, why did it fall to your lot rather than to another's? God is not unrighteous in the unequal division of property among men. Why are you rich, and why is this man poor? it is, that you may receive the reward of dispensing your goods faithfully, and that the poor may receive the recompense of his patience. When, therefore, you appropriate to yourself that wealth which belongs to many, and of which you are the steward, you are a robber.—We know not what necessities may happen. Can you make this apology, while you spend your wealth on a thousand superfluities? But I want it for my children.—But, is it from you, that your son received life? is it not from God? ought he, then, to hinder you from obeying God's commandments? The riches that you will leave him, may be the occasion of his ruin. Who knows, whether he will make a good or bad use of them?—He refutes the pretences of those, who think to exempt themselves from doing good in their lifetime, by leaving their goods, by will, to the poor. "Wretched men, to practice no good works but with ink and paper! it seems you wish you could have enjoyed your riches for ever, and then you would never have obeyed the precepts of the gospel: it is to death, it seems, and not to you, that the poor are indebted. God will not be thus mocked; that which is dead is not to be offered to the sanctuary: offer up a living sacrifice.—It is certain, that those, who rely on Divine Providence, are like the springs which are not dried up by drawing from them, but send forth their waters with greater force. If you are poor, lend your money upon interest to God, who is rich."

Different vices predominate in different periods. If I can gain a more enlarged way of thinking, by reviewing various ages, and cease to admire that, in which I live, exclusively, this will be one advantage of my historical travel to myself. Certain it is, that the present age is remarkable for a selfish and narrow mode of conception, and a contempt of antiquity. How many, whose reading has scarce reached farther than a monthly review or magazine, are apt to felicitate themselves on their exemption from superstition, and to deride all monks as perfect fools? If we conceive a man in Basil's days, possessed of the same contracted spirit, and capable of foreseeing the excessively mercantile taste of the present race of men; would not he be disposed to censure their covetousness; and would not the vice appear

as ridiculous to such an one, as superstition does to the moderns? Is it not as absurd and foolish in its nature?—The wisdom of man lies not in satirizing the vices of others, but in correcting his own.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

He was born at Arianzum, an obscure village belonging to Nazianzum in Cappadocia, and came into the world about the time of the Nicene council.¹ His father, of the same name, a person of rank, had been brought up among a particular sect, most resembling the Samaritans, who professed a mixture of Judaism and Paganism. To this opinion, as it had been the religion of his family, he was in early life extremely devoted. But marrying a lady of rank, and of sincere Christian piety, he was gradually induced to attend to the doctrines of the Gospel. Her prayers and persuasions were equally ardent. Gregory dreaming one night, that he sang that passage, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord," and feeling an uncommon pleasure on the occasion, informed his wife of the circumstance, who exhorted him to comply with the call of God to his soul. And soon after, Leontius, bishop of Caesarea, coming to Nazianzum, in his way to the council of Nice, Gregory was encouraged and assisted by him, and then received from the bishop of Nazianzum catechetical instruction, and the ordinance of baptism.

Nazianzum itself had but newly received Christianity. The bishop, who baptized Gregory, was the first of its pastors, and died soon after. A long vacancy took place, and the town was overrun with ignorance and vice. Gregory at length was appointed to the See, which he filled for forty-five years with great success among the people. His son, the famous Gregory, making uncommon advances in learning, in several seminaries, went to Athens to complete his education. During the voyage, a remarkable providence was made subservient to his conversion. A storm suddenly arose, and the vessel was, for several days, in imminent danger. Gregory lamented his want of baptism and of serious Christianity, and with vehement prayers devoted himself to God to be his for ever, if he would be pleased to spare his life at that time. When he had finished his prayer, the tempest ceased,

¹ Though I have consulted Socrates and Sozomen, yet the account of Cave is so full and circumstantial, and so well supported by original authorities, that I shall have little occasion to do any thing more than to abridge the life of Gregory written by the latter, except to avail myself of the industry of Du Pta, when I make a few remarks on the works of this father.

and the ship was securely conducted to her port.

His acquaintance with Basil at Athens has been mentioned. Here also, he conversed with Julian the apostate, and with that intuitive penetration into character, which seems a peculiar gift of some minds, he foretold what a curse he would, one day, prove. See, said he, what a pest the Roman empire nourishes in its bowels! Yet Julian, at that time, had done nothing to justify such suspicions. He attended Christian forms; nor was he naturally savage or inhuman. The penetrating eye of Gregory discerned, however, the embryo of the apostate, and of the scorner, in his bold and fearless spirit of disputation, and in his presumptuous curiosity;—tempers in youth, which if strong and predominant, and accompanied with quickness of parts, without special grace, seldom fail to produce remarkable fruits of impiety in maturer age, and are rather cherished than damped by sobriety of manners and intemperance of application. Pride converts every specious virtue into nourishment for herself, and Satan knows no agents in the world so proper for the promotion of his kingdom of darkness.

After his baptism, he felt himself strongly inclined to the Ascetic life, but was, though reluctant, made a presbyter by his father. The old man, better versed in prayer than disputation, was once imposed on by Arian subtilties to communicate with that sect, while he took them to be what they were not, but was recovered from the snare by the arguments of his more learned son. The latter, after giving way for a time to the monastic spirit of solitude, was prevailed on at length to return to Nazianzum, and to employ himself in a manner more worthy of a Christian, by assisting his aged father in his pastoral cares.

His friend Basil offering him the bishopric of Sasima in his diocese of Caesarea, and the place being very mean and obscure, the pride of Gregory was hurt, and for some time a coolness subsisted between the two friends, both of whom appear not to have possessed, in any great degree, the humble simplicity of better times. And, their fondness for Platonism, and their accurate acquaintance with secular learning, had doubtless no tendency to supply the defects of their Christian views of doctrine.

Gregory rejecting the offer of Sasima, continued to assist his father, and had then an opportunity of enforcing a Christian duty, constantly allowed to be such in the primitive times, namely, submission to the higher powers, as well as to give the most excellent advice to the governor of Nazianzum—to use his power with moderation. Some civil tumults and broils at that place furnished him with this occasion.

His father, dying near an hundred years old, and his mother soon after, both of them persons of uncommon piety, Gregory was induced to go to Constantinople. Here, under the emperor Valens, Arianism was at its height, and Gregory preached to a few Christians in a sort of Conventicle; but growing popular and successful, he was at last appointed bishop; and at length, under Theodosius, he was confirmed in the charge. It proved, however, extremely uneasy to him, notwithstanding the kindness of the emperor. His liberality and integrity were indeed admirable; and his private life and manners were most exemplary. But the weakness of his body, the irritability of his temper, and his extreme deficiency in talents for government, rendered him, notwithstanding the just renown of his incomparable oratory, unfit for so public a station.

The gospel was, however, adorned by his virtues, and, particularly, by the meekness with which he forgave a person who had been suborned to murder him, and who, having been baffled in his purpose by Providence, came to him in agony of conscience, and confessed his intentions.

While he was at Constantinople, the famous council was held there for the settlement of the peace of the church, during the course of which, Gregory, a man of tried honesty, but void of political refinement, found himself so much opposed by those who envied him, and his best designs so much misconstrued, that he entreated Theodosius to accept his resignation. His farewell sermon, in which he reminded his audience what God had done by him from his first preaching among them, when he was attacked with stones by the Arians, being a master-piece of eloquence, moved the passions of the audience exceedingly.—It has too much eloquence in it, and too little of the gospel of Christ.

A second synod being held at Constantinople, Gregory, disgusted with the treatment he had met with in the first, and being also afflicted with a very infirm state of health, refused to come, and expressed himself with unbecoming acrimony against councils in general. However, he exerted himself sincerely to promote unity in the church, and was unbounded in his liberality to the poor. In his time, he was looked on as an admirable theologian. And indeed, in justness of taste, eloquence and secular learning, he was inferior to few; and these shining qualities, in an age more contentious than simple with respect to religion, procured him an admiration for Christian knowledge above his deserts. He died in the year 389, in his own country.

His principal writings are his sermons. The first of them describes the difficulties and importance of the pastoral office, blames

the forwardness of many to undertake it, and describes himself confounded under a sense of his insufficiency. In two other discourses, he inveighs against Julian in a manner that discovers more of the orator than of the Christian. In another discourse, he endeavours to reconcile the minds of the people of Nazianzum to the payment of taxes. He observes, that Jesus Christ came into the world at a time when a tax was levied, to shew that God is present at such scenes, that he was made man, and did himself pay taxes, to comfort those who were in bondage, and to teach them to bear it patiently; that by thus abasing himself, he taught kings to treat their subjects with moderation; that tribute was a consequence of the first sin, because war, the cause of tribute, was the consequence of sin, and a just punishment of God.

His warm and pathetic addresses to deceased saints, were evidently little else than mere strokes of oratory. They were accompanied with the expression of a doubt, whether they understood what he said. They seem, however, to have strengthened the growing superstition, and encouraged that worship of saints, which he certainly did not intend, in the manner, in which it was afterwards practised. Unguarded passages of this sort occur in other writers of these times, besides this father, none of whom really designed to inculcate idolatry.

In another discourse, he protests against the too common practice of delaying baptism, which, from the example of Constantine, had grown very fashionable, for reasons equally corrupt and superstitious. Men lived in sin as long as they thought they could safely, and deferred baptism till their near approach to death, under a groundless hope of washing away all their guilt at once. He presses the baptism of infants, and refutes the vain pretences of those who followed the fashionable notions.

His poems demonstrate a rich vein of genius and a sensibility of mind. Nor is there wanting a true spirit of piety. In the fifty-

eighth are some excellent reflections on the falsehood of mere human virtue, the necessity of divine grace through Jesus Christ, and of an humble confidence in it, and the danger of perishing through pride and vain glory. This humility was evidently at the bottom of Gregory's religion; but I much doubt whether his less learned parents did not understand it, practically, much better than he. Mankind are naturally more favourable to gifts than to graces, and even good men are but too ready to suppose there is much of the latter, wherever there appears an abundance of the former.

Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, was not inferior to many in this century for unfeigned purity of faith and manners. But the particulars of his life are for the most part uninteresting. It is proper, however, to mention his zeal in tearing a painted curtain which he saw in a place of public worship. This seems at once a proof of his detestation of images and pictures in religion, and also of the weak beginnings of that superstition in the fourth century. In this place let us not omit to observe his very laudable spirit of beneficence. Numbers from all parts sent him large sums to distribute to the needy, in confidence of his charity and integrity. His steward one day informed him, that his stock was nearly exhausted, and blamed his profuse liberality; but he continued still as liberal as before, till all was gone; when he received suddenly from a stranger a large bag of gold. Another story deserves to be recorded as a monument of divine Providence, the rather, as it seems extremely well authenticated.* Two beggars agreeing to impose on him, one feigned himself dead, the other begged of Epiphanius to supply the expenses of his companion's funeral. Epiphanius granted the request; the beggar on the departure of the bishop desired his companion to rise; but the man was really dead! — To sport with the servants of God, and to abuse their kindness, is to provoke God himself, as the bishop told the survivor.

* *Socrus*. B. VII. c. 77.

CENTURY V.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

SOME brief account of this renowned father will properly introduce the fifth century to the acquaintance of the reader, because the transactions with which his story is connected, extend a few years from the last century into this, and are very descriptive of the religious state of the East at that time.

He was, at the commencement of the century, bishop of Constantinople, where the emperor Arcadius resided, while his brother Honorius reigned in the West: these two were the sons and successors of the great Theodosius. But we must look back to the rise of John Chrysostom. He was born at Antioch,¹ about the year 354. His parents were persons of some rank, and by the care of his mother (for he lost his father soon after his birth) his education was attended to in a very particular manner. By her means, he had the advantage of being early prejudiced in favour of Christianity. Yet, being naturally studious of eloquence, he devoted himself to the care of that great master, Libanius of Antioch, who being one day asked, who would be capable of succeeding him in his school? "John," said he, if the Christians had not stolen him from us." So great was the idea he had formed of his powers of eloquence!

He prognosticated right. It would be easy to produce abundance of instances of his oratorical abilities; I wish it were in my power to record as many of his evangelical excellencies.

Having pleaded a little time in the forum, he began to find a vacancy in his mind not to be supplied by secular arts and studies. The Spirit of God seems, from that time, to have drawn him to study the Scriptures, and one material advantage he derived from his master Diodorus, who was afterwards bishop of Tarsus. By him, he was taught to forsake the popular whims of Origen, and to investigate the literal and historical sense of the Divine word; a practice, in which he differed from most of the fathers of his time.

He contracted an intimate friendship with one Basil, whom, by a deceit, he drew into the acceptance of a bishopric, nor is he ashamed to justify himself in doing evil, that

good may come.² We have seen the deliberate fraud practised by Ambrose to avoid a bishopric. And I find Chrysostom, in his exposition of the second chapter of the epistle to the Galatians, supposes that both Paul and Peter were laudably engaged in fraud, because their views were charitable and pious. We shall afterwards have occasion to consider this matter a little more fully, when we come to the controversy between Jerom and Augustine on the subject. At present, suffice it to observe, that the decline in doctrine had evidently produced a decline in ethics, that the examples of men, otherwise so justly reputable, as Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Jerom,³ must have had a pernicious effect on Christian morals, and that the growth of austere superstition was unfavourable to truth and integrity.

Notwithstanding the entreaties of his pious mother, he lived in monastic austerities for some time; after which, Flavian, bishop of Antioch, promoted him to the office of presbyter in his diocese. About the year 379, a sedition broke out at Antioch, on account of taxes, and the people dragged about the streets the statues of Theodosius, and of his excellent lady Flaccilla, and of their two sons, in contempt. But finding afterwards the danger of the emperor's resentment, this inconstant and turbulent people were in the greatest distress. Antioch had ever been very favourable to the name, at least, of Christianity, since the time that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. But luxury and the love of the world, were, it is to be feared, much more common in these times than godliness, even among the Christian inhabitants. About two hundred thousand citizens made up the sum total; and half of these were Christians. John failed not to improve the opportunity. Serious as he himself was in Christian views, so far as he understood them, and excellent as a preacher of the law, he exhorted them to repentance, and very properly made the awful suspense they then were in, an instructive emblem of our expectation of the day of judgment. Hymns and litanies were composed to solicit God to move the heart of the emperor to pity, and many who had never attended the house of God, and had spent

¹ Sacerdotio, B. I.

² The reader will carefully observe, that Augustine is not involved in this censure, in the least degree. Let it be observed also, that these pious frauds had no connection with the love of lucre, and arose more properly from superstition, than from hypocrisy.

³ Cave's Life of this Father.

their whole time in the theatre, now joined in divine worship with much earnestness and assiduity. Flavian the bishop, though aged and infirm, undertook a journey to Constantinople to deprecate the wrath of the emperor. Libanius the sophist also did the same; but the generality of the philosophers hid themselves in holes and corners, and did nothing for their country in danger; while the monks left their cells, and flocked into the city, and intreated the magistrates and judges to behave with lenity. One Macedonius particularly^a addressed the commissioners, and desired them to admonish the emperor not to destroy the image of God, lest he should provoke the divine Artist; which he might think would be the case, when he reflected how angry he himself was for the sake of brazen statues. Thus, even monks, who exhibited Christianity in a degenerate form, exceeded in benevolence and active virtue the boasted and boasting sons of philosophers!

The spirit of Chrysostom, in the mean time, was softened and over-awed with the mingled sensations of pity and devotion, while he observed the severe proceedings of the courts and the vain intercessions of relations for husbands and fathers. He was led to reflect, how awful the day of judgment will be, when not a mother, sister, or father, can arrest the course of divine justice, or give the least relief to nearest relations, and, in his homilies, he with much eloquence and piety enforced these considerations on a giddy unthinking people. Pastors may take the hint from hence to improve temporal scenes to the spiritual benefit of their audiences.

The generous and good-natured Theodosius expostulated with Flavian on the unreasonableness and ingratitude of the citizens of Antioch to himself, who had ever been as a parent and benefactor to them. Flavian, admitting the truth of his observations, and confessing the aggravated guilt of the city, pressed him with the divine rule, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. And his pathetic and pious admonitions prevailed. Theodosius owned, that if the great Lord of the world, for our sake, became a servant, and prayed for his murderers, it highly became himself to forgive his fellow-servants; and with great tenderness he solicited the bishop to hasten his return, and to deliver the citizens from their fears. In the mean time, the active charity of the monks and clergy had prevailed on the judges to suspend their proceedings, till they heard from the emperor, and Flavian himself returned at length with the news of the city being fully restored to his favour. And these are some of the triumphs

of the Gospel. Its mild influence on society in the suppression of the fights of gladiators and other savage practices, and in the kind and liberal behaviour of emperors towards their subjects, even in times when true religion was at no great height, demonstrate, not only, that states do act unwisely, when they venture to reject Christianity altogether, and to substitute mere ethics in its stead; but also, that it is the duty of governors and legislators, as much as in them lies, by positive institutions, to promote the knowledge and influence of that divine religion.

In the year 398, Chrysostom by the advice of Eutropius, chief chamberlain of the palace, was appointed bishop of Constantinople, being hurried thither by a fraudulent scheme, such as he himself had approved of in like cases. The emperor Arcadius, a character of the most insipid insignificance, fixed in the metropolitical chair a person of great integrity, activity, and virtue indeed; but surely not through any wisdom of his own. John began immediately to attempt the reformation of his diocese. He put an end to a custom of the clergy of keeping matrons in their families, which caused much scandal. He censured their covetousness and their luxury, retrenched the expenses of the bishop's table, and applied the surplus to the needy, built a large hospital^b for the infirm, and put it under the most salutary regulations. Such ministers as refused to amend their lives he suspended from their offices, and the widows who were maintained by the church, were admonished to abstain from their gay manner of living, or else to marry. And he pressed the laity, whose employments filled up the day, to attend divine worship in the evening.

The common people heard him gladly, as, for a time at least, they generally will hear, in all ages, a preacher who speaks to the conscience, though severely, yet faithfully, with an earnest desire exhibited in his whole manner to do them good. Even some of the Dissenters attended on his preaching nor did he labour in vain in reclaiming heretics.^c The clergy, indolent and corrupt as

^a The superiority of Christianity, considered in an ethical and political point of view, to all other religions, may deserve to be an object of attention. We have seen great proofs of it already. It is difficult to prove a negative proposition; I can only say, therefore, that I do not recollect any such humane and beneficent provisions for the poor in the whole circle of Paganism; nor do I remember any one of the philosophers, who was ever sedulously employed, by word or deed, for the lower ranks of men. True religion visits the fatherless and widows in their affliction. With justice might Ambrose, observing the liberality, which the church exercised to the needy, ask the Pagans, let them tell me, what captives were redeemed, what hospitals maintained, what exiles provided for, by the income of the temples?

^b A visible reformation of manners in a capital, which had long suffered under Arian impiety and had fallen into a general relaxation of discipline, attended his labours. Persons who, hitherto, had frequented the public shows, now came in crowds to public worship. Here he expounded various parts of the New Testament. He

they then were, opposed him vehemently, and watched opportunities against him. The wealthy and the great, offended at his plain reproofs, were as ill-disposed as the clergy. Chrysostom however persevered; nor did he confine his cares to Constantinople. In order to overcome the Arianism of the Goths, he ordained some persons of their country, and assigned them a church within the city, by whose industry he reclaimed many, and he himself often preached there, and prevailed on others of the clergy to do the same. He made liberal and active attempts to spread the gospel among barbarous nations, though the troubles, which afterwards befel him, must have checked both these and other Christian designs.

In an age of luxury and extreme relaxation of discipline, it might be expected that the uprightness and inflexible integrity of Chrysostom would expose him to many inconveniences. During the negligent administration of his predecessor Nectarius, the successor of Gregory Nazianzen, a remarkable alteration for the worse, in point of discipline, had taken place. There had been a presbyter, whose special office it was to receive the confession of penitents, and by his authority they were admitted to the communion. Superstition, most probably, had guided too much the formalities of this discipline; but profaneness was still worse, and the Lord's supper was now open to all sorts of characters, no other rules being prescribed, than what men chose to impose on themselves. It was not in the power of Chrysostom, in a metropolis so dissolute and so much under the secular influence, to restore the discipline of the church in this respect. What was wanting he supplied by preaching with the most laudable energy, and he exhorted men to repent again and again, and then to attend the Lord's supper. He was evidently speaking of private, not of public penitence. Yet his expressions were perversely interpreted by two sorts of men, of very opposite characters, the Novatians, and the more dissolute persons of the general church. The former still maintained their favourite point, of never receiving the lapsed at all. The latter accused him of giving a license to sin. Yet if the distinction between private and public penitence be attended to, the innocence of Chrysostom's expressions will be sufficiently clear, and he will appear to have only exhorted them to repentance on the encouragement of the di-

vine mercies in Christ, which offer pardon to repeated and multiplied transgressions. With what malevolence this great man was treated by the dissolute, may be easily conceived, when so grave a person as Socrates the historian, who had a partial fondness for Novatianism, expresses his wonder, that Chrysostom should have given such encouragement to sin in his sermons, and have contradicted the canons of the church which had been made with the excessive rigour that characterized the third century, and had forbidden the indulgence of communion to be granted any more than once to offenders.⁴ Nor is this the only instance in which the zeal and uprightness of good men exposes them, in a malignant world, to the censure of opposite characters, of those, who carry the profession of strictness too far, and of those, who scarce pretend to any at all. Chrysostom was accused, on this account, by the profligate bishops, and was also censured by Sisinnius, bishop of the Novatians in Constantinople, who wrote a book against him, and censured him with great severity.

Of this Sisinnius I shall not record what Socrates thinks it worth while to spend one chapter upon.⁵ For, though he evidently desires to interest the reader in his favour, he records nothing but what tends to shew him to have been a polite, facetious, well-bred gentleman, who made himself very agreeable to all parties, and was a contrast to the severity of Chrysostom by his engaging manners. He survived the latter, and lived on terms of amity with Atticus his successor, and I should with pleasure recite an account of his pious labours and success in the ministry, could I find any real proof that he was endowed with the spirit of the gospel, and exhibited it in his conduct. Though the article of dress is but an external thing, his wearing white garments against the mode of the times, when the clergy were habited in black, was certainly indecent; nor is his saying, that there was no Scripture, which required the wearing of black, a satisfactory apology.

It is not from such courtly characters as these, that reformation in the Church, in an age of corruption, like that at the beginning of this century, is to be expected. Chrysostom was, doubtless, endowed with many qualities which belong to a reformer. Socrates owns his extreme temperance, and at the same time blames him for the vice of anger, and the charge seems but too just.

This infirmity, too common to men of generous and noble minds, gave, no doubt, great advantage to his enemies, and concurred with various circumstances to crush the bishop of Constantinople. A Synod at length, held and managed by Theophilus, bi-

preached three times a week, and sometimes seven days successively. The crowd was so great, that to place himself where he might be heard, he was obliged to sit in the middle of the church in the reader's desk. He reformed likewise the churches of the neighbouring provinces of Thrace, Asia, and Pontus. It appears that various churches in the east were administered with shameful corruption and profligacy, and several bishops, by the vigour of Chrysostom's zeal, were deposed.

⁴ Fleury, B. XX. 40. Sozom. B. VIII. c. 5.

⁵ Socrat. B. VI. 21.

⁶ Chap. 22.

shop of Alexandria, his determined enemy, and one of the worst ecclesiastical characters in history, supported by the influence of the proud Eudoxia, the empress, condemned him with extreme injustice. I shall not stain these pages with a detail of their iniquitous proceedings.* It is more to our purpose to notice his conduct under the severe persecution.

Chrysostom, foreseeing the effect of the storm which was gathering round him, addressed himself to the bishops, who were his friends, assembled in the great room of his house. "Brethren, be earnest in prayer, and as you love our Lord Jesus, let none of you for my sake desert his charge. For, as was St. Paul's case, I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I see I must undergo many hardships, and then quit this troublesome life. I know the subtlety of Satan, who cannot bear to be daily tormented with my preaching. By your constancy you will find mercy at the hand of God, only remember me in your prayers." The assembly being afflicted with vehement sorrow, he besought them to moderate their grief; "for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "I always told you this life is a road in which joys and sorrows both march hastily away. The visible scene of things before us is like a fair, where we buy and sell, and sometimes recreate ourselves. Are we better than the patriarchs? do we excel the prophets and apostles, that we should live here for ever?" When one of the company passionately bewailed the desolations of the Church, the bishop striking the end of his right fore-finger on the palm of his left hand (which he was accustomed to do, when much in earnest) said, "Brother, it is enough, pursue the argument no further; however, as I requested, desert not your churches. As for the doctrine of Christ, it began not with me, nor shall it die with me. Did not Moses die? and did not Joshua succeed him?—Paul was beheaded, and left he not Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and many more behind him?"

Eulysius bishop of Apamea answered, "But if we keep our churches, we shall be compelled to communicate and subscribe." "Communicate, returns he, you may, that you make not a schism in the Church," but

subscribe not the decrees; for I am not conscious of having done any thing, for which I should deserve to be deposed."

As Theophilus assumed a power, which doubtless belonged not to him, and as Chrysostom observed, it did not become a man that lives in Egypt to judge one that lives in Thrace, the bishop of Constantinople refused to own the authority of the court. His enemies deposed him for contumacy, and to support their views, they informed the emperor Arcadius, that he had been guilty of treason, meaning the affront he had put on the empress in calling her Jesebel; and it is not improbable, but that he had, in some of his sermons, compared her to the wife of Ahab, whom, in truth, she much resembled in pride and cruelty.

The people of Constantinople, however, who sincerely loved the bishop, insisted on his being heard by more equitable judges, and so strong was their agitation, that Chrysostom, fearing a popular insurrection, delivered himself up secretly to the officer, who came to execute the Imperial warrant against him. He was conveyed immediately to a port in the Black Sea. As soon as it was known, that he was gone, the whole city was in an uproar; many blamed the emperor, who, in so weak a manner, had given up the most upright of men to the malice of his wife and of Theophilus. The tumult was at length so violent, that Eudoxia herself, frightened at the danger, pressed her husband to recall him, and even wrote to Chrysostom a letter full of protestations of sorrow and respect. Chrysostom was, therefore, restored to his bishopric. But the calm season lasted not long. A silver statue of the empress was solemnly erected in the street just before the great church of St. Sophia. It was dedicated with many heathenish extravagances, and the people used to meet there in sports and pastimes, to the distraction of the congregation. The bishop, impatient of these things, blamed them from the pulpit, and with great imprudence began his sermon after this manner: "Now again Herodias raves and is vexed, again she dances, again she desires John's head in a charger."

would have been very unjustifiable. Good men by remaining in it, might do a thousand times more good, than they would be capable of doing by deserting it. And so long as the doctrine itself is preserved sound and pure, by the continuance of holy men in the church, who in that case can remain with a clear conscience, revivals may be expected from time to time. Of this we shall shortly see a solid instance in the Western church, and such we have seen in the Church of England in our own times. Separation seems only justifiable in the case of a total corruption and incurable malady, such as that at the time of the Reformation. Hasty and intemperate schisms rend the church into miserable fragments, prevent, as far as man can prevent, any great and general revival of godliness, and are strongly guarded against in the epistolary writings of the New Testament. The rashness of Chrysostom in this affair was so great, that I could not easily believe this account. But I see the truth of the story is confirmed by the authority both of Sozomen and Sozomen, and on consulting them it does not appear that any apology can be made for the

* Among the other charges, he was accused of saying, "if thou sinnest again, repent again; and as oft as thou sinnest, come to me again, and I will heal thee." This is the calumny already spoken of. That he spoke contemptibly of the clergy, and had written a whole book stuffed with falsehoods against them, these also were among the articles of accusation, which, in general, betray the folly and malice of his enemies, and are more than sufficiently confuted by the piety and godly zeal, which appear in his writings still extant.

† Cave's life of Chrysostom. Pallad viii Chrysostom, p. 67.

‡ In this he doubtless acted with great propriety. Corrupt as the eastern church then was, the corruption was rather in practice than in doctrine. And such a separation, as afterwards took place at the Reformation,

The enemies of the bishop could not desire a greater advantage. And they improved it to the utmost. Numbers were ready to gratify the resentment of Eudoxia. And Arcadius, overcome by importunity, ordered again his deposition. He was suspended and confined: His friends and followers were dispersed, rifled, killed, or imprisoned. Edicts were issued, severely threatening all that refused to renounce communion with Chrysostom. It was the season of Easter, when the Catechumens, who had been instructed, were to receive baptism. The friends of Chrysostom fled into the fields, to keep the festival there. The emperor himself went out that day into a meadow adjoining to the city, and espied a field covered with white. These were the Catechumens, who had been baptized the night before, and had then their white garments upon them, being near three thousand in number. The emperor being told that they were a conventicle of heretics, ordered a party of soldiers to disperse them. Several women of quality were very rudely treated on this occasion, and numbers were imprisoned and scourged. Receiving at length a warrant signed by the emperor to depart, Chrysostom exhorted the deaconesses to continue their care of the church, and to communicate with the bishop, who should be chosen, by common consent, in his room,* and he retired once more from his See, in the year 404.

Arsacius, brother of Nectarius, being appointed bishop in his stead, the friends of Chrysostom, in opposition to the advice which he had given them, refused to submit, and formed separate assemblies, and were severely persecuted by the name of Joannites. Among these friends was an opulent lady, called Olympias, who had honoured him abundantly, and appears to have profited much by his ministry. She had acted in the church as a deaconess, and was now banished to Nicomedia, whence she supplied the exiled prelate with money. Here she lived many years, an example of piety.

Chrysostom himself was conveyed to Cucusus in Armenia, a barren cold region, infested with robbers, and mournfully marked already with the murder of Paul, the former bishop of Constantinople. His journey to this place was attended with many grievous hardships, though sweetened with the compassionate care of various persons, who keenly sympathized with injured innocence. At Cucusus, however, he met with very generous treatment. Here he preached frequently to a people who heard him gladly. A grievous famine raging in those parts, he was enabled by the liberality of Olympias to re-

lieve the poor. And he redeemed many captives which had been taken by the Isaurian robbers. He had formerly conceived a plan for converting the Pagans, which were still in Phœnicia, and had made some progress in it. But understanding that the design had met with a check, he again made vigorous attempts for the support of so good a work, and ordered sums of money for the erection of churches and the support of missionaries. He seemed to recover his health for a time, but winter approaching, he felt the usual effects of that season on persons of weak constitutions. His stomach had unhappily received much injury from the austerities of his youth, and never recovered its tone. The next spring he recruited, but was always obliged to observe the strictest regimen.*

At Constantinople, Atticus was chosen to succeed Arsacius, who died in the year 405, and the Joannites were still persecuted in the Eastern church. Chrysostom himself was obliged to move from place to place on account of danger from robbers, and as he wrote to Innocent, bishop of Rome, who sincerely, though unsuccessfully, laboured in his cause, he was, in the third year of his banishment, exposed to famine, pestilence, war, continual sieges, an incredible desolation, to death every day, and to the Isaurian swords.

His enemies, beholding with an evil eye, the respect every where paid to him, procured an order for him to be removed to Pityus, the very shore of the Black Sea. In his way thither, he was brought to an Oratory of Basiliscus, who had suffered martyrdom under Dioclesian's persecution. Here he desired to rest, but his guards, who had all along treated him with brutish ferocity, refused him the indulgence. Nature was however exhausted; he had not gone four miles, before he was so extremely ill, that they were obliged to return with him. Here, he received the Lord's supper, made his last prayer before them all, and having concluded with his usual doxology, "glory be to God for all events," he breathed out his soul, in the fifty-third year of his age, in the year 407. The Joannites continued their separate assemblies, till the year 438, when Proclus, then entering on the See, put an end to the schism, by making a panegyric on Chrysostom's memory, and procuring an order from the emperor Theodosius II, the son of As-

* This great imbecility was one reason, why he had always dined alone, when bishop of Constantinople. It is well known, that to persons of his weak habit, the attendance at feasts and entertainments is one of the severest punishments. Chrysostom had still more weighty reasons for his reticence; the sumptuousness of Constantinople was in a manner proverbial, and he thought it his duty to check it. If any thing can add to the wickedness of those accusations which drove him from his See, it is, that he was charged with pride for dining in solitude. Yet he had been very hospitable to the poor, and was an uncommon pattern of beneficence and liberality.

bishop. He certainly mistook not the wisdom of the serpent, with the innocence of the dove.

† Hence it is evident, that the appearance of a popular election of bishops was still kept up at Constantinople; but it could only be the appearance.

cadius, that his body should be brought back to Constantinople with great funeral solemnity. He, who in his lifetime, had met with so many enemies, was now universally esteemed and admired, and Theodosius himself sincerely bewailed the injury done to so excellent a personage by his parents.

I have formerly observed, that the corruption of Christianity was deeper and stronger in great cities than in the country. The bishopric of Damasus at Rome was an unhappy proof of this in the West; and in the East, the bishopric of Chrysostom in the beginning of this century, affords a lamentable proof of the same thing. Never was there a more striking confirmation of the truth of the Christian doctrine, the original and native depravity of man. How often have we been told, that whatever is said, in the writings of the New Testament, of the carnal mind, and its enmity against God, of the woe denounced against those of whom all men speak well, of the persecution which must be sustained by those who love the Lord Jesus, belongs only to the apostolical age, or at least to the times preceding the æra of Constantine, when heathenism prevailed in the Roman empire! Behold, the empire is become Christian; idolatry and all the rites of heathenism are subjected to legal penalties; the profession of the gospel is become exceedingly honourable; and the externals of religion are supported by the munificence of emperors and by the fashion of the age, even with excessive sumptuousness. Behold a bishop of the first See, learned, eloquent beyond measure, of talents the most popular, of a genius the most exuberant, and of a solid understanding by nature, magnanimous and generous, liberal I had almost said to excess, sympathizing with distress of every kind, and severe only to himself, a man of that open, frank, ingenuous temper, which is so proper to conciliate friendship, a determined enemy of vice, and of acknowledged piety in all his intentions! Yet we have seen him exposed to the keenest shafts of calumny, expelled with unrelenting rage by the united efforts of the court, the nobility, the clergy of his own Diocese, and the bishops of other Dioceses. What is to be said? His successor Atticus lived long in peace; and, by a cautious conduct, preserved the good will of men in general; though he had joined in the persecution of Chrysostom; Sisinnius too, the Novatian, had in a degree joined in the same opposition. Both these men, however, by elegant and affable manners, conciliated the good will of men, and seem to have passed through life without any persecution. Whether men are of the general church, or of the dissenters, it matters not; the favour or the enmity of mankind depends not on such external distinctions. What either of these two did in

opposing sin, I know not; nor is there enough recorded of them to fix their characters with certainty. With Chrysostom, who was evidently their superior in holiness and virtue, we have seen how hard it fared. He was choleric, and too vehement, no doubt; but he knew the importance of divine things, and was, therefore, much in earnest, and the best charity was, doubtless, at the bottom of all his zeal. If the world naturally loved what was good, could it not have thrown a candid veil over one fault, the frequent attendant of the most upright minds? should it lavish its favours on men of ambiguous virtue and pusillanimous prudence? certainly it seeth not as God seeth; it loves flattery and the decent appearance of virtue; not plain truth, not genuine virtue. Such seems the just conclusion from the case: real godliness, under Christian as well as heathen governments, is hated, dreaded, and persecuted. And the important doctrine of our native depravity is confirmed by such events, and proves itself to the senses of mankind.

I miss my aim in this history, if I shew not the constant connection between the doctrines of the gospel and holy practice. This connection is sufficiently plain in the history of Chrysostom: though, had he known divine truth more exactly, and entered more experimentally into the spirit of the gospel, he would have been more humble, and would have known better how to govern his temper.

This great man, however, **THOUGH DEAD YET SPEAKS** by his works. He laboured much in expounding the Scriptures, and though not copious in the exhibition of evangelical truth, still he every where shews that he loved it. On those words of the Apostle, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, he says, "What a saying!—what mind can comprehend it? For, says he, he made a just person a sinner, that he might make sinners just. But rather I should say, he says more:—He doth not say, he made him a sinner, but sin,—that we might be made, not righteous, but righteousness, even the righteousness of God. For it is of God, since not of works (which would require spotless perfection) but by grace we are justified, where all sin is blotted out." Here is a plain testimony to the Christian doctrine of justification, and under this shelter, this holy man found, no doubt, a rest for his own soul.

Those who think every thing too much which is bestowed on a minister of Christ, may read a just defence of the maintenance of pastors, and a proper rebuke of their own uncharitableness in his comment on Philipians, chap. eleventh. On the fourth chapter of Thessalonians, in opening the Apos-

the's direction against fornication, he forcibly rebukes the prudential avarice of many parents, who protract the marriage of their sons, till they are far advanced in life. In the mean time they are led into various temptations; and, if they do marry afterwards, they are too much corrupted by vicious habits, to behave with that decorum in the marriage-state, which they might have done in more early life. He recommends, therefore, early marriages; and the advice deserves the more attention, as coming from a man, who often expresses his admiration of the monastic life, which, however, he does without throwing any reproach on matrimony.

In occasionally speaking of that passage of St. Paul to the Romans, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,"^b he introduces the doctrine of free-will, in the same manner, as most of the fathers did, who spake of it at all, from the days of Justin, and observes that the whole is said to be of God, because the greatest part is. So hard pressed is he with the plain words of the Apostle, fully opposing the system he had imbibed. But Platonic philosophy had done this mischief to the church, to the great hurt of Christian faith and humility.^c

The chief use of his treatise on the priesthood, is to excite in young minds a serious awe with respect to the danger of miscarrying in an office so important and so sacred, and to check the levity and presumption with which so many undertake it! He lays down, however, some good views of the difficulty of steering clear of extremes, in suiting instructions to particular cases, in checking impertinent curiosity, and in directing the people to useful objects.

The practical views of this writer, so far as they relate to the regulation of the conduct, are the most striking. Having lived in two great imperial cities, where plays and shows were very frequent, he earnestly inveighed against those disorders. He calls the stage, an academy of incontinence. "What harm, say you, is there in going to a play? Is that sufficient to keep one from the Communion? I ask you, can there be a more shameless sin, than to come to the holy table, defiled with adultery? hear the words of Him who is to be our judge. Jesus Christ saith, whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. What can be said of those, who passionately spend whole days in those places, in looking on women of ill fame? with what face will they pretend to say, they did not behold them to lust after

them.—They see women adorned on purpose to inspire lust.—If, in the church itself, where Psalms are sung, the Scripture is read, and the fear of the Almighty appears, lust will creep in like a thief, how shall they overcome the motions of concupiscence, who frequent the stage."^d

CHAPTER II.

AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS ABRIDGED.

FROM the latter end of the third century to the former part of the fifth, we have seen a gradual declension of godliness; and when we view in the West, the increase of monastic darkness and superstition; in the East, the same evils to a still greater degree, attended with such an augmentation of iniquity, that even where all the formalities of godliness are preserved, the power of it is hated and persecuted in the same manner as by Pagans; in fine, when the vestiges of Christian truth are scarce discernible, we shall not be far amiss in pronouncing, that, in such a state of religion, the wholesome effects of the first effusion of the Spirit of God are brought to a close.

It is evident, that real Christianity, notwithstanding its nominal increase under Christian emperors, must soon have been extinct, if God had not interposed with a second great effusion of his Spirit. He did so in the course of the fifth century, and the church arose again from its ruins in one part at least of the Empire.^e

It behoves us to attend to this gracious display of divine goodness; and for this purpose, we must look back into the last century, to trace the secret springs of this dispensation. They particularly involve the private life of Augustine, bishop of Hippo. He was the great instrument of reviving the knowledge of evangelical truth. By a very remarkable work of divine grace on his own soul, he was qualified to contend with the growing corruptions. It is an happy circumstance, that we have, in his confessions, a large and distinct account of his own conversion.—And who could relate it like himself? I proceed to give an account of these Confessions;—the propriety and importance of so long a detail will afterwards appear.^f

^a Balls and public meetings of entertainment are as much the objects of his indignations as plays. Games of chance also he represents as the occasions of blasphemies, losses, anger, quarrels, and all manner of crimes. Du Pin. Chrysostom.

^b The truth is, men who really fear God, in all ages have been united against these things; and for this reason, which is felt by them, though not by others, namely, they have too serious a conflict with in-dwelling sin, to give themselves up to external incitements of evil.

^c The Westerns, as will appear in the course of the narrative.

^d The life of this great man was written by Possidius, sometimes called Possidonius, a pious presbyter of his

^e In his exposition on Hebrews, 7th chapter.
^f It may be worth while just to mention, that he patetically rebukes the sloth and negligence of parents and masters, who would throw all the work of instruction on ministers, and do nothing themselves for the spiritual benefit of their household. A plain thought; but how true at this day.

AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS ABRIDGED.

BOOK I.

THOU art great, O Lord, and most worthy to be praised; great is thy power, and of thy wisdom there is no end. A man, a portion of thy creation, wishes to praise thee, a man too, carrying about him his mortality, carrying about him the evidences of his sin, and a testimony, that thou resistest the proud; yet, even such a man wishes to praise thee. Thou excitest him, that he should delight to praise thee. For thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless, till it rest in thee.

Who shall give me to rest in thee? who shall give me, that thou mayest come into my heart, and inebriate it, that I may forget my own evils, and embrace thee, my only good? What art thou to me? Pity me, that I may speak. What am I to thee, that thou shouldest command me to love thee, and be angry at me, if I do not, and threaten me with the greatest miseries? Is that itself a small misery, to be destitute of the love of thee? Alas! alas! tell me by thy compassions, O Lord, my God, what art thou to me? SAY UNTO MY SOUL, I AM THY SALVATION. So speak, that I may hear. Behold! the ears of my heart are before thee, O Lord; open them, and SAY UNTO MY SOUL, I AM THY SALVATION. May I run after this voice, and apprehend thee. HIDE NOT THY FACE FROM ME. May I die,* that I may see it, lest I die indeed. The room of my soul is narrow, too narrow for thy entrance. Oh! do thou enlarge it. It is ruinous; oh! do thou repair it. It has what must offend thine eyes, I know and must confess. But who shall cleanse it? or to whom shall I cry but to thee? CLEANSE ME FROM MY SECRET FAULTS, AND KEEP ME FROM PRESUMPTUOUS SINS. I BELIEVE, AND THEREFORE SPEAK. O Lord, thou knowest. Have not I confessed to thee my sins, and hast not thou pardoned the iniquity of my heart? I will not contend in judgment with thee, who art truth itself; for I would not deceive myself, lest my iniquity lie against itself. I will not contend in judgment with thee, for if thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who can stand?^b

But, do thou suffer me to speak before

thy mercy; me, who am dust and ashes. Suffer me to speak, because I address thy mercy, and not the scornfulness of proud men. Perhaps thou deridest the simplicity of my thoughts, yet wilt thou turn and exercise compassion upon me. What else would I say, O Lord, my God, than that I know not whence I came hither into this,—shall I call it mortal life, or vital death? Thy compassionate consolations however received me, and thou gavest me the aliment of infancy.

Hear me, O God. Woe to the sins of men! And a man says these things, and thou pitiest him, because thou hast made him, and madest not sin in him. Who shall inform me of the sin of my infancy? For none is clear from sin in thy sight, not even the infant, whose life is one day. Could it be a good thing, with tears to beg, what it would be noxious to receive, to express vehement indignation against my elders and betters, if they did not comply with my will, and to endeavour, though with feeble blows, to revenge myself of them? The imbecility of my infant limbs was innocent, not so the spirit of the infant. I have seen and observed an infant full of envy, who could not yet speak; pale with anger he looked at his fellow-suckling with bitterness in his countenance. But as I was conceived in iniquity, and my mother nourished me in her womb in sin, where, Lord, where, or when was I innocent? But I pass by this whole time. For, what can I say of that, no traces of which I recollect?^c

What miseries, Lord, did I experience, when I was directed, in the plan of my education, to obey my teachers, in order to the acquisition of that knowledge, which might be subservient to the attainment of false riches and honour? Yet, I sinned; O Lord, who ordainest all things, except our sins; I sinned in rebelling against the orders of parents and masters. That literature, which they wished me to acquire, with whatever intention, was yet capable of being applied to a good use. My disobedience arose not from the love of better things, but from the love of play and a fondness for games and shows. Behold, Lord, these things with an eye of mercy, and deliver us who now call on thee; deliver also those, who do not call on thee as yet, that they may call on thee, and experience thy deliverance.

I had heard from childhood of the eternal life promised unto us through the humility of the Lord our God condescending to our pride. Thou sawest, when I was yet a boy,

part of his conduct: whereas, those who rest for salvation, in any degree, on themselves, are ever tempted to extenuate their sins.

^c The serious reader will not be inclined to pass over, in levity, these striking proofs of the sinful propensity of nature existing itself, antecedent to the growth of reason or the power of habit.

diocese, afterwards bishop of Calama. Though poorly written, it yet deserves to be mentioned, as it confirms the authenticity of the historical parts of the Confessions. Augustine was born in the city of Tagasta in Numidia, of creditable parents. His father, Patricius, continued a Pagan till near his death; his mother Monica, was renowned for Christian piety. At the time of his full conversion to the gospel he was upwards of thirty years of age.

^b He seems to wish to undergo any mortification, even loss of life itself, rather than lose the enjoyment of his God.

^c It is obvious to observe, how a mind like Augustine's, altogether resting on grace, and free justification, is freed from the solicitude of self-vindication in any

and seemed to be on the brink of death through a sudden and violent pain of the stomach, with what eagerness I begged Christian baptism from the charity of my mother and of the church. My mother, who travelled in birth for my eternal salvation, herself possessed of very lively faith and hope in thee, was hastening to comply with my desires, that I might wash away my sins, confessing thee, O Lord Jesus, when I was suddenly recovered to health. A relapse into presumptuous sin, after baptism, being judged more dangerous, and the prospect of life admitting too great a probability of such relapse, my baptism was deferred. Thus did I at that time believe in Christ, my father being the only infidel in our family. My mother was sedulous, that thou shouldest be my Father, rather than he, and in this she was favoured with thy help: obedient as she was to her husband by thy command, in this point she prevailed over him. Was the delay of my baptism for my benefit? What is the cause that we hear every where such sounds as these, LET HIM DO WHAT HE WILL, HE IS NOT YET BAPTIZED. How much better for me, had I been, in more early life, initiated into the fold of Christ?²⁴

Yet, in childhood itself, though little dreaded by my mother, in comparison of the dangers of youth, I was indolent, and I improved in learning only through necessity. A false secular ambition was the only motive laid before me by my teachers; but thou, who numberest the hairs of our heads, imprevokedst their error to my advantage, whilst thou justly punishedst the great sins of so young an offender by their corrections. The learning, which with no holy intention they taught me, was sanctified by thee, and my guilty laziness was scourged. So hast thou ordained, that a mind disordered by sin, should be its own punishment.

But why I hated Greek literature, in which I was instructed when very young, I do not even yet sufficiently understand. For I was fond of Latin learning, not indeed the first rudiments, but those things which classical masters teach. To read, and write, and learn arithmetic, would have been as severe drudgery to my spirit, as all the Greek literature. I lay this also to the account of my native depravity, which prefers the worse, and rejects the better. The uses of reading, writing, and arithmetic are obvious; not so, the study of the wanderings of *Æneas*, which I attend-

ed to, while I forgot my own:—and of what use was it to deplore the self-murdering Dido? while yet I could bear unmoved the death of my own soul alienated from thee in these pursuits,—from thee, my God, my life. O thou light of my heart, and bread of my inward man, and true husband of my soul, I loved thee not, I committed fornication against thee, and (such the spirit of the world) I was applauded with “well done” on all sides, and I should have been ashamed to have been found otherwise disposed. Yet the friendship of the world is fornication against thee. This is the kind of literature, which has arrogated to itself the name of polite and liberal. Learning of real utility is looked on as low and vulgar. Thus, in my childhood did I sin by a vicious preference. Two and two make four, was to me an odious sing-song; but the wooden horse, the burning of Troy, and the ghost of Creusa, were most enchanting spectacles of vanity. Yet why did I hate Greek literature, when employed on the same sort of objects? Homer is most agreeably trifling; to me, however, when a boy, he was by no means agreeable. I suppose Virgil would be the same to Grecian youths, on account of the difficulties of learning a foreign language. Discipline is needful to overcome our puerile sloth, and this also is part of thy government of thy creatures, O God, for the purpose of restraining our sinful impetuosity. From the ferulas of masters to the trials of martyrs thy wholesome severities may be traced, which tend to recal us to thee from that pernicious voluptuousness, by which we departed from thee.

Hear, O Lord, my prayer, let not my soul faint under thy discipline, nor let me faint in confessing to thee thy mercies, by which thou hast delivered me from all my own evil ways, that thou mayest endear thyself to me, above all the blandishments, which I was following, and that I may love thee most ardently, and embrace thy hand with all my heart, that thou mayest free me from all temptation even to the end. For lo! my King and my God, may whatever useful thing I learnt when a boy, serve thee, may what I speak and read and number, serve thee, because while I was learning vain things, thou gavest me thy discipline, and in those vain things forgavest the sins of my delights. For in them I learnt many useful words, though they might have been learned, abstracted from this connection with vanity.

Alas! the torrent of human custom! who shall resist thee? How long wilt it be, ere thou be dried up? how long wilt thou roll the sons of Eve into a great and tempestuous sea, which even they, who have fled for refuge to the cross, can scarce escape! Have not I read in thee of Jove, at once the thunderer and the adulterer? What is this, but

²⁴ The narrative before us may justly be called a history of the usual operations of the Spirit of God on his people. Conversions in early life, on remarkable occasions, are common among these, and usually wear away, as in the case of Augustine. The examples of Constantine and Crispianus deferring their baptism seem to have made the practice fashionable, not from any idea of the unlawfulness of infant-baptism, but from the selfish and venial notions, which he has stated. No wonder, that he, who justly thought that his own soul had suffered much by the delay, was afterwards a strenuous assertor of the expediency of more early baptism.

to teach men to call their crimes no crimes, while they have the sanction of gods, whom they imitate? Terence introduces a profligate young man justifying his lewdness by the example of Jove, while he beholds a picture on the wall of Jupiter and Danaë,¹ and excites himself to lust, as by divine tuition. SHALL HE DO THESE THINGS, WHO SHAKES HEAVEN WITH HIS THUNDER? AND MAY NOT I, A POOR MORTAL, DO THE SAME? Yet I, my God, now indulged by thy grace, to behold thee in peace, learnt these things with pleasure, was delighted with them, and was called a boy of promising genius. The motives of praise and disgrace then spurred on my restless heart to literary exertions. What acclamations were made to a puerile exercise of mine on a particular occasion! Were not all these things smoke and wind? Was there not another way of exercising my talents,—in celebrating thy praise? But what wonder, that I departed far from thee, my God, when men were proposed to me as objects of imitation, who would blush to be detected in a barbarism or solecism, in reciting their own actions though innocent, and at the same time might recite the story of their own lewdness, not only with impunity, but even with commendation, provided they did so with a copious and elegant flow of diction? O thou God of long suffering, who permittest men thus to affront thee! Wilt thou not deliver, from this horrible pit, the soul that seeks thee, that thirsts after thy delights, and says, *THY FACE, LORD, WILL I SEEK?* It was by the darkness of libidinous affection, that the younger son^m went to a great distance from thee, a gracious Father in bestowing on him thy gifts; and still more gracious to him, when returning in indigence. How studiously exact are men in observing the rules of letters and syllables, while they neglect the rules of eternal salvation! Thou dwellest on high in inaccessible light, and scatterest penal blindness on unbridled lusts. A man shall seek the fame of eloquence, while, before the crowded audience, he guards against the least false pronunciation, and guards not at all against the fiercest malevolence of his own heart raging against his fellow-creatures.

In this school did I wretchedly live. To please men was then to me the height of virtue, whilst I saw not the whirlpool of baseness, in which I was cast from thine eyes. For what more filthy than I, all this time, deceiving by innumerable falsehoods both masters and parents through the love of play, and amusements? I even robbed the storehouses of my parents, either from the spirit of gluttony, or to bestow things agreeable to my play-fellows. In my plays, I often sought to obtain fraudulent victories,

overcome by the desire of vain excellence. Yet, what should I dread so much to suffer, or be so ready to accuse in another, if detected, as that very thing, which I did to others; in which, however, if I myself was detected, I was more disposed to rage than to submit? Is this puerile innocence? far from it, O Lord. Change the scene only from pedagogues and masters, from nuts and balls, and sparrows, to prefects, kings, gold, and estates, and you see the vices of men, just as heavier punishments succeed to ferulas.

Still, O Lord, in my childhood, I have much to praise thee for. Many, many were thy gifts; the sin was mine, that I sought pleasure, truth, and happiness, not in thee, but in the creatures, and thence rushed into pains, confusions, and errors. I thank thee, O my delight and confidence, for thy gifts; but do thou preserve them for me, and the things which thou hast given me shall be increased and perfected, and I shall be with thee, because thou hast given me to be so.^a

BOOK II.

I AM willing to record the scene of baseness and carnal corruption, which I passed through in my youth, not that I may love them, but that I may love thee, my God. I do it with the love of thy love, recollecting my own very evil ways in the bitterness of memory, that thou mayest be endeared to me, O Delight that never deceives, Delight happy and secure, thou which collectest and bindest together the dispersed parts of my broken soul: while averse from thee, the only God, I vanished into variety of vanities.¹⁰ For I was inflamed in my youth to be satiated with infernal fires, and became as rottenness in thy sight, while I pleased myself, and desired to please the eyes of men.

Love was my object; but, by the excess of passion, the serenity of affection was lost in the darkness of lust. My weak age was hurried along through the whirlpool of fla-

^a It is a very unjust surmise of Mr. Gibbon, to infer from Augustine's unwillingness to learn Greek, that he never attained the knowledge of that language; when he tells us, that he was doubtless a person of uncommon quickness of parts. His sloth and other vicious practices in childhood were, I suppose, such as are common to children. But few are disposed to look on them as serious evils. To Augustine's mind they appeared what they were, the marks of an apostate nature. Though, since the destruction of Pagan idolatry, there is by no means the same danger of reading classic Authors, yet how justly blameable is the practice of leading boys so much to lewd poets, instead of acquainting them with the more solid excellencies of many prose authors!—A just selection of the most innocent and useful authors, and an assiduous comparison of their sentiments with those of Christianity all along, will not only guard against the poison of the classics, but instruct youth in the necessity and importance of Revelation; and school-masters, as well as children, may learn, in what we have seen, just matter of rebuke for exalting literary above moral excellence.

¹⁰ The beautiful thought, thus diffusively expressed in our author's usual manner, is happily painted in a single word by the Psalmist, *UNITES my heart to fear thy name.* Ps. lxxvii. 11

¹ Terence in Eunuch.

^m Luke xv.

giousness. Thy displeasure was all the time embittering my soul, and I knew it not. The noise of my carnal chains, and the punishment of my pride rendered me deaf to thy voice; I went far from thee; thou sufferedst it: I was tossed and agitated, and I overflowed with the ebullitions of lewdness, and thou wast silent, O my too tardy joy! At that time thou wast silent, and I wandered deeply from thee among many barren seeds of woes, in a state of proud degradation, and restless weariness. Thy Omnipotence is not far from us, even when we are very far from thee; I might have heard thy voice, recommending a single life devoted to God, allowing indeed matrimony, and frowning on lewdness.* But I burst all legal bonds, yet escaped not thy scourges;—who of mortals can? For thou wast always present, severely merciful, mixing all my unlawful delights with bitter alloys, that I might seek for pleasure without alloy or obstacle, and not be able to find the possibility of this, but in thee, thee I say, O Lord, who connectest pain with the breach of thy laws, and smitest that thou mayest heal, and slayest that, that we may not die from thee. Where was I, and how long did I live in exile from thy house, in that sixteenth year of my age, when the madness of lust seized me altogether, and I willingly suffered the reins to be struck out of my hands? To the disgrace of our nature, this species of lust is every where tolerated, though forbidden by thy laws.¹ My friends took no pains to bridle me by the wholesome restraint of marriage; their anxiety was, that I should acquire the arts and graces of eloquence.

That year I had vacation from my studies, being returned from Madaura, a neighbouring city, where I had begun to learn oratory, to my father's house at Tagasta. He, with a spirit above his circumstances, for he was but a poor freeman of the town just mentioned, determined to send me to Carthage, that I might have the greatest advantages for proficiency. Why do I relate these things before thee, my God, to my fellow creatures, the few of them, who may read these lines?—That both I and they may consider, out of how great a depth it behoves us to cry to thee. And what is nearer than thine ears, if the heart confide in thee, and the life flow from faith? Who did not then extol the noble spirit of my father, laying out so much money on the education of his son; a spirit, so much superior to that of many much richer citizens, who had not the

heart to send their sons to Carthage? while yet he had no concern in what manner I grew up to thee. Whether I was chaste or not, cost him no thought, provided I was eloquent. In this year of vacation my passions were rampant without controul. This pleased my father, who, intoxicated with liquor, expressed his pleasure on the occasion to my mother. She had lately begun to feel thy holy love, and had been washed in the laver of regeneration. He was a catechumen in profession. Instantly, she conceived a pious trepidation on my account. My God, thou speakest to me by her, and warnedst me strongly against the ways of vice. Thy voice in her I despised, and thought it to be only the voice of a woman, which made not the least impression on my mind. So blinded was I, that I should have blushed to be thought less wicked than my companions, and even invented false stories of my sinful exploits, to obtain their commendation. My pious parent was prevented from encouraging me to marry, because she thought the usual studies, which I was now to enter upon, might be serviceable to promote in me the work of true religion. My father thought little of thee, much of his son, in vain expectations. Thus, while they both were too anxious for my literary improvements, I made progress in vice, and shut myself up in the darkness of sin, so as to bar up, against myself, the admission of thy truth as much as possible.

Thy law certainly punishes theft, O Lord, and so does the LAW² WRITTEN in the hearts of men. For, what thief can bear another? Yet, compelled by no want, I deliberately committed theft; through the wantonness of iniquity, and the contempt of justice. It was not the effect of the theft, but the sin itself which I wished to enjoy. There was a pear-tree in the neighbourhood of my father's vineyard, loaded with fruit, though not of the most tempting kind. At dead of night, in company with some profligate youths, I plundered the tree; the spoil was principally thrown to the hogs: for I had abundance of better fruit at home. Behold my heart, my God, behold my heart, which thou hast pitied in its deep abyss of sin. What did I mean, that I should be gratuitously wicked? I loved destruction itself. In the common course of wickedness men have some end in view. Even Cataline himself loved not his crimes, but something else, for the sake of which he perpetrated them. We are deceived by appearances of good, embracing the shadows, while we follow our own lusts, instead of seeking the substance, which is only in thee. Thus, the soul commits fornication, when it is turned from thee, and seeks, out of thee, that pleasure, honour, power

* 1 Cor. vii.

¹ Would to God, that this were not the case in Christian countries, as well as Pagan! If the reader feel himself inclined to treat with levity the serious manner in which juvenile vices are treated by the author, he will, when better informed of the malignity of sin, condemn his own taste, not that of Augustine. The same contrast may be extended to the case of his theft which follows.

² He means the voice of natural conscience. See Rom. ii. 15.

wealth, or wisdom, which it never will find in its genuine purity, till it return to thee. All, who remove themselves far from thee, and set up themselves in opposition, perversely imitate some attribute of God; though even by such imitation they own thee to be the creator of the universe. This is the general nature of sin. It deceives by some fictitious shadow of that good, which in God alone is to be found. But what vicious or perverse imitation of my Lord was there in my theft? I can conceive none, unless it be the pleasure of acting arbitrarily and with impunity against law;—a dark similitude of Omnipotence. O rottenness! O monster of life, and profundity of death! Could I delight in what was not lawful, merely on that account, because it was not lawful? What reward shall I give to the Lord, that I can now recollect these things without fear of damnation? I will love and bless thee, Lord, because thou hast pardoned such horrible evils. I impute it to thy grace that thou hast melted my sins as ice is melted. I impute also to thy grace my exemption from those evils which I have not committed. For of what I was not capable, who loved even gratuitous wickedness? I am sensible, that all is forgiven, not only the evils which I have actually committed, but also those evils which by thy guidance I have been kept from committing. He who, called by thee, hath avoided the evils which he hears me confessing, should not deride me a poor patient healed by the Physician, since he himself is indebted to the same Benefactor for his health, or, to speak more properly, for his being afflicted with a less degree of sickness.

O the unsearchable seduction of pernicious friendship, the avidity of doing mischief from sport, the pleasure of making others suffer, and this without any distinct workings either of avarice or of revenge! Let us go, let us do it, and we are ashamed to appear defective in impudence. Who can unfold to me the intricacies of this knot of wickedness? It is filthy, I will pry no more into it, I will not see it. Thee will I choose, O righteousness and innocence, light honourable indeed, and satiety insatiable! With thee is perfect rest, and life without perturbation. He who enters into thee, enters into the joy of his Lord, and shall not fear, and shall be in the best situation in thee, the best. I departed from thee, and erred, my God, too devious from thy stability in my youth, and became to myself a region of desolation.

BOOK III.

I CAME to Carthage surrounded with flagitious lusts. After thee, O my God, the true bread of life, I hungered not; and though

furnished with real indigence, and longing after that which satisfieth not, I had no desire for incorruptible aliment, not because I was full of it; for the more empty I was, the more fastidious I grew. My mind was sickly; having no resources within, she threw herself out of herself to be carried away by intemperate appetite. My sordid passions, however, were gilded over with the decent and plausible appearances of love and friendship. Foul and base as I was, I affected the reputation of liberal and polite humanity. I rushed into the lusts with which I desired to be captivated. My God, my mercy, with how great bitterness, and yet how kindly, didst thou mix that sweetness, by which I was miserably enslaved, and beaten with all the iron rods of envy, suspicion, fear, indignation, and quarrelling. The spectacles of the theatre now hurried me away, full of the images of my miseries, and fermentations of my fire.

The arts of the Forum now engaged my ambition; the more fraudulent, the more laudable. Pride and arrogance now elated my soul, though I was far from approving the frantic proceedings of the men called *EVERSORES*, who made a practice of disturbing modest pleaders, and confounding their minds by riots. Amidst these things, in that imbecility of judgment which attends youth, I studied the books of eloquence with the most ardent desire of vain glory, and in the course of my reading dipped into the Hortensius of Cicero, which contains an exhortation to the study of philosophy. This book was the instrument of effecting a remarkable change in my views. I suddenly gave up the fantastic hope of reputation by eloquence, and felt a most ardent thirst after wisdom. In the mean time I was maintained at Carthage at my mother's expense, being in the nineteenth year of my age, my father being dead two years before. How did I long, my God, to fly from earthly things to thee, and I knew not what thou wert doing with me. And at that time, O light of my heart, thou knowest, though I was unacquainted with the apostolical admonition, TAKE HEED LEST ANY MAN SPOIL YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND VAIN DECEIT; that this was the sole object of my delight in the Ciceronian volume, that I was vehemently excited by it to seek for wisdom, not in this or that sect, but wherever it was to be found. And the only thing which damped my zeal was, that the name of Christ was not there, that precious name, which from my mother's milk I had learned to reverence. And, whatever was without this name, however just, and learned, and polite, could not wholly carry away my heart. I determined therefore to apply my mind to the holy Scriptures to see

what they were; and I now see the whole subject was impenetrable to the proud, low in appearance, sublime in substance, and veiled with mysteries; and my frame of heart was such as to exclude me from it, nor could I stoop to take its yoke upon me. I had not these sensations when I attended to the Scriptures, but they appeared to me unworthy to be compared with the dignity of Cicero. My pride was disgusted with their manner, and my penetration could not enter into their meaning.* It is true, those, who are content to be little children, find by degrees an illumination of their souls, but I declined to be a child, and elated with pride imagined myself to be possessed of manly wisdom.

In this situation I fell in with the Manichees, men, who had in their mouths the mere sound of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and were always talking of THE TRUTH, THE TRUTH, and yet formed the most absurd opinions of the works of nature, on which subjects the heathen philosophers far excelled them. O truth, how eagerly did I pant after thee, which they repeated continually with their mouths, and in many huge volumes! but they taught me to look for my God in the Sun and Moon, and also in a number of splendid phantasms of their own creation." I endeavour to feed on these vanities, but they being not my God, though I supposed so, I was not nourished, but exhausted. How far did I wander then from thee, excluded even from THE HUSKS WHICH THE SWINE DID EAT! For, the fables of the poets, which I did not believe, though I was entertained with them, were preferable to the absurdities of these lovers of truth. Alas! alas! by what steps was I led to the depths of Hell! Panting after truth, I sought thee, my God, not in intellectual, but in carnal speculation; for I confess to thee, who didst compassionate my misery, even while I was hardened against thee. The Manichees seduced me, partly with their subtle and captious questions concerning the origin of evil, partly with their blasphemies against

the Old Testament-Saints.† I did not then understand that, though the divine rule of right and wrong be immutable in the abstract, and the love of God and our neighbour be ever indispensably necessary, yet that there were particular acts of duty adapted to the times and seasons and circumstances, in which they were placed, which, abstracted from such considerations, would be unlawful. In much ignorance I at that time derided thy holy servants, and was justly exposed to believe most ridiculous absurdities. And thou sentest thy hand from above, and freedst me from this depth of evil, while my mother prayed for me, more solicitous on account of the death of my soul, than other parents for the death of the body. She was favoured with a dream, by which thou comfortedst her soul with hope of my recovery. She saw herself standing on a WOODEN RULE, and a person coming to her, who asked her the cause of her affliction, and on being answered, that it was on my account, he charged her to be confident, that where she was, there also I should be. On which she beheld me standing by her on the same wooden rule. Whence was this but from thee, gracious Omnipotent! who takest care of each and all of us, as of single persons? When she related this to me, I endeavoured to evade the force of it, by observing that it might mean to exhort her to be what I was; without hesitation she replied, it was not said, where he is, there thou shalt be, but where thou art, there he shall be. Her prompt answer made a stronger impression on my mind than the dream itself. For nine years, while I was rolling in the slime of sin, often attempting to rise, and still sinking deeper, did she in vigorous hope persist in incessant prayer. I remember also, that she intreated a certain bishop to undertake to reason me out of my errors. He was a person not backward to attempt this, where he found a docile subject. "But your son, says he, is too much elated at present, and carried away with the pleasing novelty of his error, to regard any arguments, as appears by the pleasure he takes in puzzling many ignorant persons with his captious questions. Let him alone; only continue praying to the Lord for him; he will, in the course of his study, discover his error. I myself, perverted by my mother, was once a Manichee, and read almost all their books, and yet at length was convinced of my error, without the help of any disputant." All this satisfied not my anxious parent; with floods of tears she persisted in her request, when at last he, a little out of temper on account of her importunity, said, "Be gone, good

* An excellent description of the usual effect of a little Scriptural study on a proud mind, which, by the just judgment of God, is given up to judicial imputation and specious delusion in some way or other.

† The Manichees, so called from Manes their founder, had existed about an hundred years. It would not be worth while to notice them at all, were it not for their connection with the life of Augustine. Like most of the ancient heretics, they abounded in senseless whims not worthy of any solicitous explanation. This they had in common with the Pagan philosophers, that they supposed the Supreme Being to be material, and to penetrate all nature. Their grand peculiarity was to admit of two independent principles, a good and an evil one, in order to solve the arduous question concerning the origin of evil. Like all heretics, they made a great parade of seeking truth with liberal impartiality, and were thus qualified to deceive unwary spirits, who, suspecting their own imbecility of judgment, the last thing in the world, and regardless of the word of God and hearty prayer, have no idea of attaining religious knowledge by any other method than by natural reason.

† The Manichees objected to the characters of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, &c. on account of various actions allowed under the dispensation of their times, but forbidden under the new Testament, and thence formed an argument against the divinity of the Old Testament.

woman; it is not possible, that a child of such tears should perish." She has often told me since, that this answer impressed her mind like a voice from Heaven.

BOOK IV.

FOR the space of nine years, from the nineteenth to the twenty-eighth year of my age, I lived deceived and deceiving others, seducing men into various lusts, openly by what are called the liberal arts, and secretly by a false religion; in the former proud, in the latter superstitious, in all things seeking vain glory, even to theatrical applauses and contentious contests; and, to complete the dismal picture, a slave to the lusts of the flesh. So infatuated was I with the Manichean follies, that I drew my friends into them, and with them practised the impieties of the sect. The arrogant may despise me, and all who have never felt a salutary work of self-humiliation from thee, my God. But I would confess to thee my own disgraces for thy glory. What am I, left to myself, but a guide rashly conducting others down a precipice? and when I am in a better state, what am I, but an infant sucking thy milk, and enjoying thee, the bread that perisheth not? and what is any man, since he is flesh? Let the proud and the strong despise us; but we weak and poor would confess to thee.

At this time I maintained myself by teaching rhetoric; and without fraud I taught my scholars, not how to oppress the innocent, but sometimes how to vindicate the guilty. I lived also with one woman, but without matrimony. At this time I ceased not also to consult astrologers, nor could I be induced by the arguments of a very sensible physician, nor by the admonitions of my excellent friend Nebridius, to reject these follies.

While I was teaching rhetoric in this manner in my native town, I enjoyed the friendship of a young man of my own age, a school-fellow and companion from infancy. Indeed there is no true friendship, except thou cement it among those who cleave to thee, through the love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. But it was a friendship too sweet, inflamed by the fervour of similar studies. For I had drawn him aside from the true faith, which he held not in a deep and genuine manner, into the Manichean follies, on account of which my mother bewailed me. And lo! thou who pursuest thy fugitives, O God of vengeance and source of mercies, and convertest us to thyself by wonderful methods, lo! thou removedst him from this life, when I had scarce enjoyed his friendship a year, after my return to Tagasta. While he lay a long time senseless in a fe-

ver, and his life was despaired of, he was baptized without his own knowledge, a thing which I regarded with great indifference, as not doubting but he would retain my instructions which had been instilled into his mind, rather than that which had been applied to his body, when he was ignorant of the matter. However, against all expectation, he recovered. As soon as I had an opportunity of conversing with him, I attempted to turn into ridicule his late baptism, in which I expected his concurrence. But he dreaded me as an enemy, and with wonderful freedom suddenly admonished me, that if I would be his friend, I should drop the subject. Confounded at this unexpected behaviour, I deferred the conversation, till he should be thoroughly recovered. But he was removed from my madness, that he might be saved with thee to my consolation; after a few days the fever returned and he died. How miserable was my life! my country was a punishment, my father's house a wonderful infelicity, and whatever I had enjoyed in common with him, without him was torment itself. I found I could now no longer say, He will come shortly, as I was wont to do. If I said, hope in God, my soul refused; for the man whom I had lost was an object preferable to the phantasm,^v on which I was hid to fix my hopes. Weeping alone was sweet to me, and supplied the absence of my friend.

Wretched I now was, and wretched is every soul that is bound by the friendship of mortal things. Behold my heart, my God; O my hope, who cleanekest me from the contagion of such affections, and directest my eyes to thee, and pluckest my feet out of the net. O madness! not knowing how to love men as men!—O foolish man! bearing with no moderation the lot of humanity! The load of misery burdened me, which I knew thou alone couldst cure; but I was unwilling and impotent, because when I thought of thee, I had only a shadowy idol before me. If I attempted to throw my burden on thee, it returned upon myself, as I found nothing that would support it. I fled however from my country, and came to Carthage.

Time, other objects, and other friendships, gradually lessened my sorrow. But happy is he who loves thee, and his friend in thee, and his enemy for thy sake. For, he alone loses no friend, to whom all are dear in him who is never lost, and who is he but our God, who made and fills heaven and earth? None loses thee, but he who lets thee go; and he who dismisses thee, whither does he fly, but from thee PROPTER, to thee AVERSE? God of power! turn us, and shew thy face, and we shall be saved. For.

^v He means the fantastic idea of God, which as a Manichee he had embraced.

wherever the soul of man turns itself, it fixes upon sorrow, except in thee. Be not vain, my soul, and deaf in the ear of the heart through the tumult of vanity. The world cries, that thou shouldst return, and there is rest. There with God fix thy mansion, there intrust whatever thou hast, my soul, at least when fatigued with fallacies. If souls please thee, love them in God, and carry them with thee to him as many as thou canst, and say to them, let us love him, he made these things, and he is not far off. The good ye love is from him, but it will deservedly be bitter, if ye love it unjustly, deserting him. Ye seek a happy life: our life descended hither, and bore our death, and destroyed it from the abundance of his own life. After his descent will ye not ascend and live? But why ascend, since ye are too high already? Come down, that ye may ascend to God. For by rising up against him ye have fallen. Tell them these things, that they may weep, and so take them with thee to God, because thou sayest these things from his Spirit, if the fire of his love burn in thee.

I made approaches to thee, and thou repelledst me, because thou resistest the proud; and what was prouder, than to assert, that I was naturally what thou art? Alas! of what avail was it, that I understood the logick of Aristotle and what are called the liberal arts, while I had my back to the light, and to those things which really illuminate the face? I had, it is true, a facility of comprehension, and acuteness in argumentation, thy gift, but I sacrificed not thence to thee. Hence they were to me a curse, and not a blessing. Yet, all this time, I looked on thee as an immense lucid body, of which I myself was a fragment. How much better was it with thy children of more tardy genius, who did not recede from thy nest, but were fledged and grew up in safety in thy church, and nourished the wings of love with the aliment of sound faith! O Lord our God, let us trust in the shadow of thy wings. "Do thou carry us to hoary hairs." When thou art our strength, we have strength; our own is weakness.

BOOK V.

RECOVER the sacrifice of my confessions, and heal all my bones, that they may say, Lord, who is like unto thee? The heart, that is shut against thee, excludes not thine eye, nor does the hardness of men's hearts repel thine hand, but thou dissolvest it when thou

pleasest, in compassion or in vengeance, and none can hide himself from thy flame. But may my soul praise thee, that it may love thee, and confess to thee thy compassions, that it may praise thee! Let men be converted and seek thee, and behold, thou art there in the heart of those who confess to thee, and cast themselves upon thee, and in thy bosom deplore their evil ways; and thou in mercy wilt wipe their tears, that they may deplore still more, and rejoice in tears, because thou Lord refreshest and comfortest them.

In the sight of my God I will give an account of the twenty-ninth year of my age. A Manichee bishop named Faustus, had now come to Carthage, a great snare of the devil, and many were enchanted by his eloquence, which though I could not but commend, I yet distinguished from truth. Report had represented him as a very liberal and accomplished scholar. And as I had read many things of the philosophers, I compared them with the tedious fables of the Manichees, and found the former more probable. Thou regardest, Lord, the humble; the proud thou beholdest afar off. No doubt the foretelling of eclipses, and other things that might be mentioned, demonstrate the truth of the philosophical sciences in secular things, though in their pride they departed far from thee. Unhappy is that man who knows all these things, and knows not thee; but blessed is he, who knows thee, though he knows not all these things. But he, who knows both thee and them, is not happier on their account, but on account of thee alone is happy, if knowing thee he glorify thee as God, and be thankful, and be not vain in his imaginations. For, as he is in a better situation, who knows how to possess a tree, and is thankful to thee for the use of it, though he knows neither its height nor breadth, than he who measures it, and counts all its branches, and neither possesses it, nor knows nor has learned his Creator; so the believer, whose property all the riches of the world are, AND WHO HAVING NOTHING, YET POSSESSES ALL THINGS, by cleaving to thee, whom all things serve, is indisputably better than the most knowing natural philosopher upon earth, who lives in the neglect of thee.*

Yet the rashness of the Manichee writer, who undertook to write of Astronomy, though completely ignorant of the science, is inexcusable, especially as he pretended that the Holy Ghost resided personally in him. The ignorance of a believer, in such subjects is very excusable; even if he fancy his mistaken notions in natural philosophy to be branches of religion. But who can

* In this blasphemy the Manichees followed the Pagan philosophers. They had no idea, also, that God was a spirit. Hence our Author's long conflict, before he could form a spiritual idea of God.

† Isaiah xlv. 1.

* An excellent comparison between the state of an illiterate believer, who feeds on Christ by faith, and that of an accomplished man of science, even of one skilled in speculative theology among other branches of knowledge, but destitute of spiritual life.

bear to hear a pretender to infallible inspiration venting absurdities on the works of nature? Here then I had my doubts concerning the divinity of Manicheism, and in vain proposed them to those of the sect whom I met with. "You must wait, till the all-accomplished Faustus come to Carthage," was all the answer I received. On his arrival I found him an agreeable speaker, and one who could deliver their dotages in a more persuasive tone. But by this time I was surfeited with these subjects, and I had been taught by thee, my God, who hast instructed me marvelously, but secretly, that style and manner, however excellent, were not the same thing as sound argument. The address, indeed, the pathos, the propriety of language, and facility of expression in clothing his sentiments delighted me; but my mind was unsatisfied. The proofs of ignorance in science, which I saw in Manicheism, connected with pretensions to infallibility, staggered my mind with respect to their whole system. On freely conversing with him, I found him possessed of an ingenious frankness, more valuable than all the subjects of my investigation. He owned his ignorance in all philosophy, and left me convinced of it. Grammar alone, and some Ciceronian and other classical furniture, made up his stock of knowledge, and supplied him with a copiousness of diction, which received additional ornament from his natural vivacity of imagination. My hope of discovering truth was now at an end. I remained still a Manichee, because I despair'd of succeeding better on any other plan. Thus that same Faustus, who had been the snare of death to many, was the first who relaxed my fetters, though contrary to his own intention. Thy hands, my God, in the secret of thy providence, forsook not my soul: day and night the prayers of my mother came up before thee, and thou wroughtest upon me in ways marvelous indeed, but secret. Thou didst it, my God. FOR MAN'S GOINGS ARE FROM THE LORD: and who affords salvation but thy hand, which restores what thou hast made? It was from thy influence, that I was persuaded to go to Rome to teach, instead of Carthage. The deep recesses of thy wisdom and mercy must be confessed by me in this dispensation. I understood, that at Rome a teacher was not exposed to those turbulent proceedings, which were so common at Carthage. Thus the madness of one set of men, and the friendship of others promising me vain things, were thy means of introducing me into the way of life and peace, and in secret thou madest use of their perverseness and my own. Here I detested real misery, there sought false felicity. But the true cause of this removal was at that time hidden both from me and my mother, who bewailed me going a-

way, and followed me to the sea; but I deceived her, who held me close, with a view either to call me back, or to go along with me. I pretended, that I only meant to keep company with a friend, till he set sail; and with difficulty persuaded her to remain that night in a place dedicated to the memory of Cyprian. But that night I departed privily; she continued weeping and praying. Thus did I deceive my mother, and soon a mother; yet, was I preserved from the dangers of the sea, foul as I was in all the mire of sin, and a time was coming when thou wipedst away my mother's tears, with which she watered the earth, and even this base unprofitableness thou hast forgiven me. And what did she beg of thee, my God, at that time, but that I should be hindered from sailing? THOU, consulting in profound wisdom, and regarding the HIER of her desire, neglectedst the particular object of her present prayers, that thou mightest gratify the general object of her devotions. The wind favoured us, and carried us out of sight of the shore, when in the morning she was distracted with grief, and filled thine ears with groans and complaints; whilst thou in contempt of her violent agonies, hurriedst me along by my lusts to complete their desires, and punishedst her carnal desire with the just scourge of immoderate grief. She loved my presence with her as is natural to mothers, though in her the affection was uncommonly strong, and she knew not what joy thou wast preparing for her from my absence. She knew not; therefore she wept and wailed. Yet after she had wearied herself in accusing my perfidy and cruelty, she returned to her former employment of praying for me, and went home, while I went to Rome.

And there I was punished with the scourge of bodily sickness, and I drew nigh to hell, carrying the load of all my sins, original and actual. For Christ had not freed me from them by the body of his flesh through death. For how could a fantastic death, such as I then believed his to be, as a Manichee, deliver my soul? Whither must I have gone, had I at that time departed hence, but to the fire and torments worthy of my deeds, according to the truth of thy appointment? She was ignorant of this, and yet prayed for me absent. But thou, everywhere present, heardest her where she was, and pitiedst me where I was. Still in the crisis of my danger, I desired not thy baptism, as I had done

* It requires a mind well seasoned with Christian discernment and humility, to admire in all this the Providence of God working good out of evil, to separate what is truly holy and humble in the affections of our author's mother from what was really carnal and earthly, and hence to discover the justness of his reflections.

† Does the reader think this harsh? let him consider whether it can be any thing else than the vest of a firm belief of the word of God, and a contempt of his holiness and authority, that can make him think so, and he will do well to apply the awful case to his own conscience.

when a boy: I had grown up to my own disgrace, and madly derided thy medicine of human misery. How my mother, whose affection both natural and spiritual toward me was inexpressible, would have borne such a stroke, I cannot conceive. Mornning and evening she frequented the church, to hear thy word and to pray, and the salvation of her son was the constant burden of her supplications. Thou hearest her, O Lord, and performedst in due season, what thou hadst predestinated. Thou recoveredst me from the fever, that at length I might obtain also a recovery of still greater importance.

The Manichees are divided into two bodies, auditors and elect. He, in whose house I lodged, was of the former sort. I myself was ranked among the latter. With them I fancied myself perfectly sinless, and laid the blame of the evils I committed on another nature, that sinned within me,* and my pride was highly gratified with the conception. My attachment to this sect, however, grew more lax, as I found the impossibility of discovering truth, and felt a secret predilection in favour of the academic philosophy, which commends a state of doubt and uncertainty.^d My landlord, who had not so much experience as I of the sect, was elevated with their fancies. I checked his sanguine views, and though the intimacy I had contracted with this people, (for a number of them live at Rome) made me backward to seek elsewhere for truth, I was, however, little solicitous to defend the reputation of their tenets. It was a deplorable evil with me, that my prejudices was so strong against the Christian faith. When I thought of thee, my God, I could not conceive any thing but what was corporeal, though of the most exquisite subtilty: but what was immaterial, appeared to be nothing. And here I seemed incurable in error. I did not conceive it possible, that a good Being should create an evil one, and therefore chose to admit limits to the infinite Author of nature, by supposing him to be controuled by an independent evil principle. Yet, though my ideas were material, I could not bear to think of God being flesh. That was too gross and low in my apprehensions. Thy only begotten Son appeared to me as the most lucid part of thee afforded for our salvation. I concluded, that such a nature could not be borne of the Virgin Mary without partaking of human flesh, which I thought

must pollute it. Hence arose my fantastic ideas of Jesus,* so destructive of all piety. Thy spiritual children may smile at me with charitable sympathy, if they read these my confessions; such, however, were my views. Indeed, while I was at Carthage, the discourse of one Heliadius had moved me in some degree, who produced from the New Testament several arguments against their positions, which appeared invincible; and their answer appeared to me to be weak, which yet they did not deliver openly, but in secret; namely, that the Scriptures of the New Testament had been falsified by some, who desired to insert Judaism into Christianity, while they themselves produced no uncorrupted copies.^f Still did I pant under those masses of materialism, and was prevented from breathing the simple and pure air of thy truth.

Some unexpected disadvantages in the way of my profession laid me open to any probable offer of employ in other parts of Italy. From Milan a requisition was made to Symmachus, prefect of Rome, to send a professor of Rhetoric to that city. By the interest of my Manichean friends, I obtained the honour, and came to Milan. There I waited on Ambrose the bishop, a man renowned for piety through the world, and who then ministered the bread of life to thy people with much zeal and eloquence. The man of God received me like a father, and I conceived an affection for him, not as a teacher of truth, which I had no idea of discovering in thy church, but as a man kind to me; and I studiously attended his lectures, only with a curious desire of discovering whether fame had done justice to his eloquence or not. I stood indifferent and fastidious with respect to his matter, and at the same time was delighted with the sweetness of his language, more learned indeed, but less soothing and agreeable than that of Faustus. In their thoughts there was no comparison; the latter erred in Manichean fallacies, the former taught salvation in the most salutary manner. But salvation is far from sinners, such as I then was, and yet I was gradually approaching to it and knew not. As I now despaired finding the way to God, I had no concern with sentiments; language alone I chose to regard. But the ideas which I neglected came into my mind, to-

* Every human soul was supposed by the Manichees to have in it a mixture of the good and the evil principle.

^d A very natural and common effect of reasoning pride. When a man attempts to discover and adjust religious truth by leaning to his own understanding, he frequently finds scepticism the sole result of his most painful investigations; and every thing appears doubtful to him, except the incompetency of fallen man to understand these things, and the propriety of seeking a new nature and a spiritual understanding from above. If the errors of Manichæism appear very absurd, there are other modes of deviation from Scripture truth, which would appear no less so, were they as unfashionable in our times.

* It is evident, that this sect comprehended in it the fundamental errors of the Docetes, of whom we have spoken repeatedly.

^f The Manichees, like all other heretics, could not stand before the Scriptures. They professedly rejected the Old Testament, as belonging to the malignant principle; and when they were pressed with the authority of the New, as corroborating the Old, they pretended the New was adulterated. Is there any new thing under the sun? Did not Lord Bolingbroke set up the authority of St. John against St. Paul? Have we not heard of some parts of the Gospels as not genuine, because they suit not Socinian views? Genuine Christian principles alone will bear the test, nor fear the scrutiny of the whole word of God.

gether with the words with which I was pleased. I gradually was brought to attend to the doctrine of the bishop. I found reason to rebuke myself for the hasty conclusions I had formed of the perfectly indefensible nature of the law and the prophets. A number of difficulties, started upon them by the Manichees, found in the expositions of Ambrose a satisfactory solution. The possibility of finding truth in the church of Christ appeared; and I began to consider by what arguments I might convict Manicheism of falsehood. Could I have formed an idea of a spiritual substance, their whole fabric had been overturned, but I could not. Moreover, I found the philosophers in general explained the system of nature better than the Manichees. It seemed shameful to continue in connection with a sect replete with such evident absurdities, that I could not but prefer the Pagan philosophers to them, though I dared not trust these with the healing of my soul, because they were without the saving name of Christ. In conclusion, I determined to remain a catechumen in the church recommended to me by my parents, till I saw my way more clearly.

BOOK VI.

O THOU! my hope from my youth, where wast thou? thou madest me wiser than the fowls of heaven; yet I walked through darkness and slippery places. My mother was now come to me, courageous through piety, following me by land and sea, and secure of thy favour in all dangers. She found me very hopeless with respect to the discovery of truth. However, when I told her my present situation, she answered, that she believed in Christ, that before she left this world, she should see me a sound believer. To thee her prayers and tears were still more copious, that thou wouldst perfect what thou hadst begun, and with much zeal and affection she attended the ministry of Ambrose. Him she loved as an angel of God, because she understood that I had broken off from Manichean connections through his means, and she confidently expected me to pass from sickness to health, though with a critical danger in the interval.

She had been used to bring bread and wine for the commemoration of the saints; and still retaining the African custom, she was prohibited by the door-keeper, understanding that the bishop had forbidden the practice. Another person would not soon have been obeyed, but Ambrose was her favourite, and was himself amazed at the promptitude of her obedience. The reasons of the prohibition were, the fear of excess, and the danger of superstition, the practice itself being very similar to those of the Pa-

gana.^a Instead therefore of a cannister full of the fruits of the earth, she henceforward, on the commemoration-days of the martyrs, gave alms, according to her ability, to the poor, and received the Lord's supper, if it was celebrated on those occasions. Ambrose himself was charmed with the fervour of her piety and the amiableness of her good works, and often brake out in his preaching, when he saw me, congratulating me that I had such a mother, little knowing what sort of a son she had, who doubted of all these things, and even apprehended the way of life to be impervious to man. Nor did I groan to thee in prayer for help, intent only on study, and restless in discussions and investigations. In a secular view Ambrose himself appeared to be an happy man, revered as he was by the imperial court; only his celibacy appeared to me in a melancholy light. But what hope he bore within, what struggles he had against the temptations of grandeur, what was his real comfort in adversity, his hidden strength and joy derived from the bread of life, of these things I could form no idea; for I had no experience; nor did he know the fluctuations of my soul, nor the dangerous pit in which I was enslaved. It was out of my power to consult him as I could wish, surrounded as he was with crowds of persons, whose necessities he relieved. During the little time in which he was from them (and the time was but little) he either refreshed his body with food, or his mind with reading. Hence I had no opportunity to unbosom myself to him. A few words of conversation sufficed not. I expected in vain to find him at leisure for a long conversation.^b I profited, however, by his sermons. Every Lord's day, I heard him instructing the people, and I was more and more convinced of the falsity of the calumnies which those deceivers had invented against the divine books. And when I found, that the Mosaic expression of man made after the image of God was understood by no believer to imply, that God was in human form, though I still could form no idea of a spiritual substance, I was glad and blushed to think how many years I had falsely accused the church, instead of learning by careful inquiry.^c

The state of my mind was now something altered; ashamed of past miscarriages and delusions, and hence the more anxious to be

^a Here is a striking instance of the growth of Pagan superstition in the church. The torrent was strong, and notwithstanding occasional checks which it received, it at length overspread all Christendom, and quite obscured the light of the Gospel.

^b Doubtless, could the modesty of Augustine have prevailed on him to desire such a conference, he might have obtained it. And what a bishop then was in the church of Christ may be seen in Ambrose.

^c A remarkable instance of partiality attended with a remarkable frankness of confession. Augustus for six years believed that the general church held the corporal form of the Supreme Being, though he might with ease have learned the contrary at any time. But heresy in all ages acts in the same dissimulous spirit.

guided right for the time to come. I was completely convinced of the falsehood of the many things I had once uttered with so much confidence. I was pleased to find, that the church of Christ was plainly free from the monstrous absurdity of which I had accused her. I found too, that thy holy men of old held not those sentiments with which they were charged. And I was pleased to find Ambrose very diligently commending a rule to his people, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,"¹ when the bishop, removing the mystic veil, opened to us those things, which according to the letter might seem to teach perverseness: what he said was agreeable to me, though I was far from being convinced of its truth.² My former mistakes and blameable rashness rendered me now exceedingly sceptical, and I wanted the fullest intuitive evidence. By faith, indeed, I might have been healed. But having experienced a bad Physician, I now dreaded a good one. By believing alone could I be cured; yet for fear of believing false things, I refused to be healed, resisting thy hands, who hast made for us the medicines of faith, and hast sprinkled them over the diseases of the world, and hast attributed so great authority to them.

I could not, however, but prefer the general doctrine of the church, and think it was more reasonable to enjoin faith in subjects incapable of demonstration, than to require the belief of most absurd fables, after pretending to promise us knowledge. By degrees, thou Lord, with a mild and merciful hand regulating and composing my heart, enabled me to consider how many things I believed which I had never seen, what credit I gave to friends, to physicians, to many others, without which the common affairs of life could never be transacted; also how firmly I believed who were my parents, though I could not possibly have any demonstration concerning the matter. Thus thou persuadedst me, that those who believed thy books were not to be condemned of credulity, but those who disbelieved them were to be condemned for unreasonable obstinacy, especially as their credibility was established by the great authority which they had obtained throughout the world. "How do you know that those books were divinely inspired?" appeared to me now a question implying a doubt not worthy to be attended to. For amidst all the contentiousness of philosophers, which had so much agitated my mind,

I had ever preserved the belief of thy existence and Divine Providence. Sometimes, indeed, this belief was stronger, sometimes weaker, yet it never left me, notwithstanding my great perplexity concerning thy nature, or the way of approaching thee. As we are then too infirm to discover truth by abstract reasoning, and therefore need the authority of divine revelation, I apprehended, that thou wouldest never have attributed such high authority and influence to the Scriptures through the world, unless this had been the appointed means of our knowing thee and seeking thy will; and now the absurdities, which the literal interpretation of many things seemed to involve, after I had heard a probable exposition of several of them, I referred to the depth of mysteries; and hence the authority of the books appeared more venerable and more credible, as they in fact lay open to every one's view, and yet reserved the dignity of their secret by the most profound sentiments, offering themselves to all in a language the most open and the most humble, and exercising the attention of serious souls; so that they received all in their popular bosom, and through narrow holes transmitted only a few to thee, though many more in number, than they would do, if they were not recommended by such high authority, and did not draw in the multitude by the garb of sacred humility. I considered these things, and thou wast present with me; I sighed, and thou hearest me; I fluctuated, and thou directedst my course; I went along the broad way of the world, and thou didst not desert me.³

My heart was thirsting after honours, profits, and marriage, and thou deridedst me. In these lusts I suffered the bitterest difficulties; thou being so much the more propitious, the less thou sufferedst any thing to be pleasant to me which was not thyself. See, Lord, my heart. Now let it stick close to thee, which thou hast freed from the tenacious glue of death. How miserable was I, and how didst thou cause me to feel my misery on that day, when I was preparing to recite a panegyric to the emperor, in which there were many falsehoods, and I expected applause, even from those who knew them to be falsehoods, when my heart brooded over its anxieties, and passing through a cer-

¹ We have seen here the close thoughts of an original thinker, who had once as strong a prejudice as any against Scripture-truth, owning his rashness in condemning what he had not understood, convinced of the rationality of the Scriptures, after he had in some measure discovered the true key to their meaning, persuaded of their divinity from their providential propagation in the world, owning the unreasonableness of expecting demonstration, and of refusing assent to grounds of faith such as determine us in common life, spying a divine beauty in the plainness and simplicity of their language, adapted to all capacities, and comprehending at length the necessity of a serious mind, in order to render them effectual to saving purposes. Sceptics and infidels would do well to follow him in this train of thought: they need not be ashamed to imitate a person so acute and ingenious.

² An important observation surely! abused much by Origen and many of his followers, to fanciful and capricious purposes. In Augustine, however, the distinction between letter and spirit was generally made commendably with that between flesh and spirit, and in effect distinguished self-righteous from evangelical religion.

³ It would be well, if many, who stumble at the Old Testament, were more convinced of their own ignorance and incompetency, for want of a just and solid acquaintance with its typical nature and the laws of interpreting it.

tain street of Milan, I saw a poor beggar, I suppose at that time with a full belly, jocund and merry! I sighed, and spake to my friends who were with me, of the many pains of our madness, because from all the toils, which with so much labour and vexation we underwent, we expected only that same rest and security, which that beggar had already attained, though we were uncertain, whether we should ever reach it. In truth, he was not possessed of true joy, but I, by the ambiguous windings of art, sought it in a more delusory way. He, however, was evidently merry, I full of anxiety; he at his ease, I full of fear. Were I asked, whether frame of mind I should prefer, I should without hesitation choose his. Yet if I were asked, whether I would be Augustine, or the beggar, I should say the former. How perverse was this? Much to this purpose did I say to my friends, and often observed how things were with me, and I found myself miserable, and I grieved, and doubled that misery. And if any thing prosperous smiled upon me, I was backward to lay hold of it, because it flew away almost before I could lay hold of it.*

My most intimate conversations on these subjects were with Alypius and Nebridius. The former, my townsman, had studied under me both at Tagasta and at Carthage, and we were very dear to each other. The torrent of fashion at the latter place, hurried him into the Circensian games, of which he became extravagantly fond. I was vexed to see him give into a taste so destructive of all sobriety and prudence in youth, and cannot but take notice of the providential manner, in which he was delivered. While I was one day expounding in my school at Carthage, an allusion to the Circensian games occurred as proper to illustrate my subject, on which occasion I severely censured those who were fond of that madness. I meant nothing for Alypius; but thou, Lord, who hadst designated him for a minister of thy word, and who wouldst make it manifest, that his correction should be thy own work, infixed a deep sting of conviction into his heart; he believed, that I spake it on his account, loved me the more for it, and shook off the Circensian follies. But he was afterwards involved in Manichæism with me, deceived by the appearance of good. Afterwards he came to Rome, to learn the law, and there was ensnared with a new evil, a fondness for the barbarous sports of gladiators, to which he had had a strong aversion. Some friends of his carried him to them by force, while he declared with great confidence, that his mind and eyes should still be alienated from those

spectacles. For a while he closed his eyes with great resolution, till on a certain occasion, when the whole house rang with shouting, overcome by curiosity, he opened his eyes to see what was the matter. Beholding a gladiator wounded, on the sight of the blood, he was inebriated with the sanguinary pleasure. He gazed, he shouted, he was inflamed, he carried away with him the madness, which stimulated him to repeat his visits; he became enamoured of the sports, even more than those, who had dragged him thither against his will, and seduced others. Thence thou with a strong and merciful hand recoveredst him at length, but long after, and taughtest him to put his confidence not in himself, but in thee.† On another occasion, Alypius was apprehended as a thief, and circumstances seemed to tell so much against him, that it was by a particular providence his innocence was cleared. But he was to be a dispenser of thy word, an examiner of many causes in thy church, and he learnt caution and wisdom from this event. Him I found at Rome, and he removed with me to Milan, and practised in the law with uncommon uprightness and integrity. With me he was uncertain, with respect to his plan of religion and the way of happiness.

My friend Nebridius also left a good paternal estate in the neighbourhood of Carthage, for the sake of enjoying my company; and we three were panting after happiness, till thou shouldst give us meat in due season; and amidst all the bitterness which attended our worldly concerns, while we were wishing to see the end of these things, we found ourselves in darkness, and we said with sighs, how long? yet we still followed objects with which we were dissatisfied, because we knew nothing better to substitute in their room.

As to myself in particular, I reviewed attentively how long I had been in pursuit of the true wisdom, with a determination to give up secular pursuits in case of success. I had begun at nineteen, and I was now in my thirtieth year, still miserable, anxious, procrastinating, fed with tantalising hopes, solicited in my conscience to set apart a portion of time each day for the care of my soul. "Your mornings are for your pupils: why do not you employ to serious purpose the afternoons: but then what time shall I have to attend the levees of the great, and to unbend my mind with necessary relaxation? What then, if death should suddenly seize you, and judgment overtake you unprepared? Yet, on the other side, what if death itself

* A lively picture of human vanity, perfectly agreeing the distress of those in high life to be equal to that of those in low at least! Ambition receives no cure from the review, till the man knows what is better.

† It is obvious to observe hence the folly of self-confidence, and the bewitching power of temptation over so weak and corrupt a creature as man. Many who would deem it impossible that they should enter with spirit into the obnoxious of the stage, or the cruelties of the Slave-trade, by a little indulgence may soon become what beforehand they would abhor.

be the satisfaction of my being? But far be from my soul the idea. God would never have given such high proofs of credibility to Christianity, nor have shewn himself so marvelously among men, if the life of the soul be consumed with the death of the body. Why then do not I give myself wholly to seek God? But do not be in too great a hurry. You have friends of consequence, by whom you may rise in the world!

In such an agitation of mind as this did I live, seeking happiness, and yet flying from it. To be divorced from the enjoyments of the world I could not bear, particularly from female society; and as I had no idea of seeking continency but by my own strength, I was a stranger to the way of prayer and divine supply of grace. Thou, Lord, wilt give, if we solicit thine ears with internal groaning, and in solid faith cast our care on thee. My mother was solicitous and importunate for my being married, that I might in that state receive baptism. And I agreed to marry a young person, who was at present too young; as she was agreeable to me, I consented to wait almost two years. During this interval a number of us, about ten in all, formed a scheme of living in common in a society separate from the world, in which a townsman of mine, Romanianus, a man of considerable opulence, was particularly earnest. But some of us being married men, and others desirous of becoming so, the scheme came to nothing. Thou deridedst our plans, and preparedst thy own, meaning to give us food in due season, and to open thine hand, and fill our souls with blessedness. In the mean time my sins were multiplied, and the woman with whom I had cohabited, returning into Africa under a vow of never more being acquainted with our sex, and leaving with me a natural son which I had by her, I, impatient of the delay, took another woman in her room. Praise and glory be to thee, O fountain of mercies, I became more miserable, and thou approachedst nearer. Thou wast going to snatch me out of the mine of pollution, and I knew it not. The fear of death and future judgment was the check which restrained me. This had never left me amidst the variety of opinions with which I was agitated, and I owned to Alypius and Nebridius, that the Epicurean doctrine would have had the preference in my judgment, could I have fallen in with Epicurus' idea of the annihilation of the man at death; and I inquired why we might not be happy, if we were immortal, and lived in a perpetual state of voluptuousness without any fear of losing it, ignorant as I was of the misery of being so drenched in carnality, as not to see the excellency of embracing goodness itself for its own sake. I did not consider, that I conferred on these base topics with friends whom I loved, and was incapable of

tasting pleasure, even according to the carnal ideas I then had of pleasure without friends.*

O my serpentine ways! Wo to the soul which presumed, if it departed from thee, that it should find any thing better. I turned backward and forward on my sides, my back, and my belly, and all things were hard, and thou alone my rest, and lo! thou comest and freest us from our miserable delusions, and placest us in thy way, and comfortest us, and sayest, "Run, and I will bear you. I will carry you through, and bear you still."

BOOK VII.

AND NOW the older I grew, the more defiled was I with vanity, still destitute of the spiritual idea of God; not conceiving however of thee, O Lord, as existing in human form; an error of which I now saw, I had unjustly accused the catholic church, but still viewing thee as an object of sense, however refined; and when I removed the ideas of space and quantity, thou seemdest to be nothing at all. For thou hadst not yet illuminated my darkness. The arguments of my friend Nebridius, appeared to me conclusive against the Manichean idea of an independent evil principle in nature. I was grown firm in the belief, that in the Lord is nothing corruptible, mutable, or in any sense imperfect: that evil must not be imputed to him, in order that we may clear ourselves of blame with the Manichees. Still, however, a question distressed me, how came evil into being at all? admitting that it lies in the will of man, that the distinction between a natural and moral inability is real and just, and that the former is not the proper subject of blame as the latter is, still I inquired, who inserted in me this bitter plant, when I was made by my God of infinite sweetness? I inquired, whence came evil, and I saw not the evil which was in my investigations. I stated the great difficulty in various lights, and it still appeared as inexplicable as ever. The faith, however, of Christ our Lord and Saviour remained firm with me, rude and unformed indeed; yet my mind forsook it not, and was imbibing it daily more and more.¹

From the vain science of astrology also, which I had cultivated with obstinacy, I was

* A strong intimation that happiness consists in love, or friendship. Whence the pleasure of friendship with Jesus, an Almighty all-sufficient friend, made man for us, and sympathizing with us, appears to give us the just and adequate idea of bliss.

¹ I have endeavoured to compress the Author's accounts of his difficulties in these two questions, of the substance of God and of the origin of evil, into a small compass, not thinking it needful to translate them at large. Manichæism was the cause of his trouble in regard to the former. The latter is in all ages a natural temptation to our proud minds, and we are slow to learn to answer it with St. Paul, Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Rom. ix. Humility will end the subject there; and pride is not to be satisfied by any investigations.

delivered, partly by the reasonings of my excellent friend Nebriſius, and partly by a story which I heard of a master and slave born at the same point of time, whose different fortunes in life appeared to be a sufficient confutation of all predictions by the stars; and the case of Esau and Jacob in holy writ illustrated the same thing. But it was thou, and thou only, who recalledst me from the death of all error, O thou life that knowest not death, and thou wisdom who illuminatest indigent minds. Thou brakest this bond for me; still was I seeking whence comes evil? Yet, by all the fluctuations of thought thou didst not suffer me to be seduced from the faith of thy existence, of thy perfections, of thy providence, or to doubt that in Christ thy Son and in the Scriptures thou hast laid down the way of human salvation. What were the groanings, the labours of my heart! While I silently inquired, distressed and confounded, thou knewest the whole, thou knewest what I suffered, and no man whatever, not my most intimate friends, could know, by any relation which I could give, the bitterness of my soul. My folly was, to look for a local external happiness. No such was found to receive me. By the original dignity of my nature, I was above all sensual objects, inferior to thee, and thou, my true joy, madest me subject to thyself, and subjectedst to me the works of thy hands. This was the middle region of health, in which I might serve thee and rule the body. But I proudly rose up against thee, and was justly punished, by being enslaved to those things which should have been my subjects; they gave me no respite nor rest. My pride separated me from thee, and closed my eyes with its own tumour. But thou, Lord, remainest for ever, and retainest not anger for ever, thou pitiest us and rememberest that we are dust and ashes. It pleased thee to remove my deformities, and by internal incentives thou agitatedst me, that I might be impatient till thou madest thyself assuredly known to me by internal illumination. The morbid tumours of my mind were gradually lessening under thy secret medicinal hand, and the eyes of my understanding, darkened and confounded as they were, by the sharp eye-salve of salutary pains, were healing day by day.

And first, as thou wouldest shew me how thou resistest the proud, and givest grace to the humble; and how great thy mercy is shewn to be in the way of humility; thou procuredst for me, by means of a person highly inflated with philosophical pride, some

of the books of Plato translated into Latin; in which I read passages concerning the divine word, similar to those in the first chapter of St. John's gospel; in which his eternal divinity was exhibited, but not his incarnation, his atonement, his humiliation, and glorification of his human nature. For thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes; that men might come to thee weary and heavy laden, and that thou mightest refresh them; thou who art meek and lowly in heart, who directest the meek in judgment, and teachest the gentle thy ways, seeing our low estate and forgiving all our sins. This is a knowledge not to be attained, while men are lifted up by the pomp and grandeur of what appears to them a sublimer doctrine. Thus did I begin to form better views of the divine nature, even from Plato's writings, as thy people of old spoiled the Egyptians of their gold, because, whatever good there is in any thing, is all thy own, and at the same time I was enabled to escape the evil which was in those books, and not to attend to the idols of Egypt.

However, I was hence admonished to retire into myself under thy guidance, and I was enabled to do it, because thou art my helper. I entered and saw with the eye of my mind the immutable light of the Lord, perfectly distinct from sensible light, not only in degree, but in kind. Nor was it in the same manner above my mind, that oil is above water, or as heaven is above earth, but superior, because he made me, and I was inferior, because made by him.* He who knows truth, knows this light, and he who knows it, knows eternity. Love knows it. O eternal truth, true love, and loving eternity! Thou art my God, I pant after thee day and night. And when I first knew thee, thou tookest me that I might see that "to be" which I saw, and that I who saw, "as yet was not." Thou impressed repeatedly my infirm sight, thou shinedst on me vehemently, and I trembled with love and horror, and I found that I was far from thee in a region of dissimilitude, as if I heard thy voice from on high, "I am the food of those that are of full age, grow and thou shalt eat me." Nor shalt thou change me into thyself, but shalt thyself be changed into me. And I said, Can God be nothing, since he is neither diffused through finite nor infinite space? and thou criest from afar, "I am, that I am," and I heard with my

* Few men have candour enough to put themselves in the places and scenes of others. Nothing is more certain than this, that Augustine and Melancthon were men of extraordinary understanding; both however were addicted to astrology, an absurdity, which even the weakest in our age escape. Such is the difference of the

• He had been long corrupted by the Atheistic views which he had learned from the Manichees, and no wonder that he now found it so difficult to conceive aright of God. There appears something divinely spiritual in the manner of his deliverance. That the Platonic books also should give the first occasion is very reasonable; though I apprehend the Latin translation which he saw, had improved on Plato, by the mixture of something scriptural, according to the manner of the Alexandrian philosophers.

• Exodus iii.

heart and could not doubt. Nay, I should sooner doubt my own existence, than that that is not truth which is understood by the things that were made.

I now began to understand, that every creature of thine hand is in its nature good, and that universal nature is justly called on to praise the Lord for his goodness." The evil which I sought after has no positive existence; were it a substance, it would be good, because every thing individually, as well as all things collectively, are good. Evil appeared to be a want of agreement in some parts to others. My opinion of the two independent principles, in order to account for the origin of evil, was without foundation. Evil is not a thing to be created; let good things only forsake their just place, office, and order; and then, though all be good in their nature, evil, which is only a privative, abounds, and produces positive misery. I asked what was iniquity, and I found it to be no substance, but a perversity of the will which declines from thee the Supreme substance to lower things, and casts away its internal excellences, and swells with pride externally."

And I wondered that I now began to have a desire after thee, and no longer took a phantasm for thee. I was not urgent to enjoy thee, my God, for though I was hurried toward thee by thy beauty, I was presently carried downward from thee by my own weight, and I could no longer sin without groaning; the weight was carnal habit. The memory of thee was with me, and I did not doubt of the reality of that divine essence to which I should adhere, but of myself being ever brought into a state of spiritual existence. I saw thy invisible things by the things which were made, but I could not fix my attention to thee; my corruption exerting itself, I returned to my usual habits, but I could not shake off the fragrance of memory, smelling the true good, regretting the loss, and impotent to taste and enjoy."

I now sought the way of obtaining strength to enjoy thee, and found it not, till I embraced the Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER," calling and saying, I am the way, the truth, and the life. For

the word was made flesh, that thy wisdom might suckle our infancy. But I did not yet in humility hold the humble Jesus my Lord, nor know the mysterious power of his weakness, that he might humble, nourish, and at length exalt heavy laden souls. Far other thoughts had I conceived of Christ, I had viewed him only as a man of unequalled wisdom. But, of the mystery of the word made flesh, I had not formed the least suspicion. Only I concluded from the things written of him, that he must have had an human soul. Alypius indeed had conceived, that the catholic faith denied him the spirit of a man, and was a longer time prejudiced against the truth, because he confounded the church with the Apollinarian heresy. As to myself, I was not till sometime after taught to distinguish the truth from the opinion of Photinus; but there must be heresies, that they who are of the truth may be made manifest.

But when by reading the Platonic books, I began to conceive of the immaterial infinite Supreme, I talked of these things like a person of experience, but was perishing, because void of Christ. I desired to appear wise, was puffed up with knowledge, and wept not. Love, on the foundation of humility, which is Christ Jesus, was to me unknown. The books of Plato knew not this; still would I remark the providence of my God in leading me to study them, before I searched the Scriptures, that I might remember how I had been affected by them, and when afterwards my wounds should be healed by thy hand through the Scriptures, I might distinguish the difference between presumption and confession, between those who see whether we ought to go, without knowing the means, and those who see the way itself leading to the actual inheritance. Had I been informed at first by thy Scriptures, and thou hadst endeared thyself to me in their familiarity, an acquaintance with Plato might either have shaken my faith, or raised in me an undue estimation of the worth of his writings.

With eagerness, therefore, I took up the volume of inspiration," and particularly the apostle Paul, and those questions, in which he once had seemed inconsistent with himself, and the law, and the prophets, were now no more. There now appeared one uniform tenor of godliness, and I learnt to rejoice with trembling; and I took up the book, and found whatever truth I had read there, is said with this recommendation of thy grace, that he who sees should not so GLORY AS IF HE HAD NOT RECEIVED, not only that which he sees, but the power of seeing itself." For

Which seems to have been the same with Sabellianism.

It may be remarked here, how depraved the taste of man is, and how much and how long he will suffer before he give himself simply to the instruction of God's own words.

He means the inestimable privilege of spiritual understanding, through his want of which St. Paul had

* Psalm cxlviii.

Perhaps a more just account of the manner in which evil is produced can scarce be given; it is certainly well calculated to confute the principles of Manichæism.

In many true converts this was their state exactly, while God was turning them from darkness to light. Such a sense of God, as never before was known, is attained, sufficient to conquer the false and injurious thoughts of him which had been before imbibed, be they what they may. But the man feels his impotence with respect to good, and he must, with Augustine, struggle and endure for a time, till the strength of Jesus is perfected in his weakness.

Here is a clear testimony to the authenticity and genuine interpretation of that remarkable text, Rom. x. 5, the right of which has been so peculiarly offensive to those, whose fashionable heresies in our age have darkened.

what hath he, which he hath not received? And he who cannot see afar, should however walk in the way, by which he may come, see, and lay hold. For though he be delighted WITH THE LAW OF GOD IN THE INWARD MAN, YET WHAT SHALL HE DO WITH THE OTHER LAW IN HIS MEMBERS WARRING AGAINST THE LAW OF HIS MIND, AND BRINGING HIM INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE LAW OF SIN, WHICH IS IN HIS MEMBERS? For thou, Lord, art just, but we have sinned and dealt wickedly, and thy hand is heavy upon us, and we are justly delivered up to the power of the old sinner who has the power of death, because he persuaded us to follow his will, by which he did not stand in the truth. Who shall deliver us from the body of this death, but thy grace through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom the prince of this world could find nothing worthy of death, and who by his death blotted out the hand writing that was against us? The Platonic books had nothing of this, nor the face of piety, the tears of confession, the sacrifice of a troubled spirit, a broken and contrite heart, salvation, the spouse, the holy city, the earnest of the Holy Spirit, the cup of our redemption. None there hears, "Come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is one thing to see a land of peace at a distance, with no practicability of attaining it, and another to pursue the right road towards it under the care of the heavenly commander, who made the road for your use. I was wonderfully affected with these views, while I read THE LEAST OF THINE APOSTLES, and I considered thy works and trembled.

BOOK VIII.

ALL MY BONES SHALL SAY, LORD, WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE? thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. How thou brakest them, I will relate, and all who worship thee, when they hear these things, shall bless the Lord. Though now confirmed in my doctrinal views, my heart was yet uncleansed; I approved of the Saviour, but liked not his narrow way, and thou inspiredst me with a desire of going to Simplician, an aged experienced Christian, even from his youth, who seemed capable of instructing me in my present fluctuations. My desires no longer being inflamed with the hope of honour and money, I was displeased with the servitude of the world in which I lived. Thy sweetness was now more agreeable in mine eyes; but another tie still detained me, in which I had permission indeed in a legal way, though ex-

horted to the higher and nobler practice of Celibacy.* I had heard from the mouth of truth, that there are eunuchs, WHO HAVE MADE THEMSELVES EUNUCHS FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN'S SAKE.

I went then to Simplician, the spiritual father of bishop Ambrose himself, who loved him as his father. I explained to him my religious situation. When I was relating, that I had read some Platonic books translated by Victorinus a Roman rhetorician, who had died a Christian, he congratulated me on having met with that philosopher rather than any of the rest; because while they are full of fallacy, in him intimations are given of God and of his word.⁴ Then for my practical instruction, he gave me the narrative of the conversion of Victorinus, with whom he had been intimate at Rome. Thy grace was indeed admirable in that convert. He was a man of great learning, far advanced in life, well skilled in all liberal knowledge; he had read, criticised, and illustrated many philosophers; he had taught many illustrious senators; had been honoured by a statue erected in the Roman forum, as a reward of his magisterial labours; and even to his old age was a worshipper of idols, and a partaker of all the rites, to which almost the whole Roman nobility at that time were addicted; moreover, he had, many years, defended the monstrous and absurd objects of worship, to which the common people had been accustomed. But now, he was not ashamed to become a child of thy Christ, an infant of thy fountain, with his neck subjected to the yoke of humility, and his forehead subdued to the reproach of the cross. O Lord, thou, who bowedst the heavens and camest down, who touchedst the mountains, and they smoked, by what means didst thou insinuate thyself into his heart? He read, as Simplician told me, the holy Scripture, and studiously investigated all Christian literature, and told my instructor, not openly, but in secrecy as to a friend, "Know that I am already a Christian." He answered, "I shall not believe it, nor rank you among Christians, till I see you in the church of Christ." But he smiling answered, "Do walls then make Christians?" This kind of dialogue was frequently repeated between them. For Victorinus feared to offend his friends, men of rank and dignity, and he dreaded the loss of reputation. But after that by further studying of the word and by secret prayer he had acquired more strength, and feared to be denied by Christ before the angels, if he denied him before men, and felt himself condemned for being ashamed of Christian co-

long appeared to him contradictory, confused, and disgusting. He is well qualified to recommend to others the value of divine teaching, who like Augustine, is experiencing it in himself. Nothing teaches humility like such experience.

* Rom. vii.

* Corinthians vii.

⁴ Here I apprehend is a proof of the decay of Christian taste in the church at that time, the consequence of Ammonianism and Origenism, namely, a disposition to find in Plato what he has not. What communion had the temple of God with idols?

craments, though he had not been ashamed of demon-worship, he blushed at his false modesty; and suddenly said to Simplician, "Let us go to the church, I wish to be made a Christian." The venerable old saint unable to contain his joy, went with him, when he was imbued with the first sacraments of instruction. Not long after he gave in his name, that he might have the benefit of Christian baptism. Rome was astonished; the Church rejoiced. The proud saw and were indignant, and gnashed with their teeth and pined away; but, the Lord his God was the hope of thy servant, and he no longer regarded lying vanities. At length, when the season came on of professing his belief, which profession is usually delivered at Rome from a high place in the sight of the faithful, in a certain form of words gotten by heart, by those who are to partake of thy grace in baptism, an offer was made by the presbyters to Victorinus, that he should repeat them more secretly, as was the custom for some who were likely to be disturbed through bashfulness. But he chose rather to profess his salvation in the sight of the holy multitude; for there was no salvation in rhetoric, and yet he had publicly professed it. When he mounted the pulpit to repeat, with a noise of congratulation, as many as knew him, resounded his name; and who did not know him? Amidst the general joy, the sound, though checked with decent reverence, went around, "Victorinus, Victorinus." They exulted at the sudden sight of him; and were as suddenly silent, that they might hear him. He pronounced the form of words with an excellent confidence, and all wished to hold him in their bosoms, and they actually did so in love and joy.*

O good God! what is the cause, that men more rejoice in the salvation of a soul despaired of, than if it had always been in a state of security? For even thou, merciful Father, rejoicest more over one penitent, than over ninety and nine just persons, that need no repentance, and we hear with peculiar pleasure the recovery of thy prodigal son. Now what is the reason, that the mind is more delighted with things recovered, than with things never lost? Human life is full of such instances. Is this the law of human happiness? How high art thou in the highest, and how inscrutable in the deepest. Thou never recedest from us, and with reluctance we return to thee? Awake, O Lord, and do, quicken and recal us, inflame and carry us along; burn, be sweet to our taste,

and let us now love and run. The joy of Victorinus's conversion indeed was greater, because his influence and authority, it was hoped, might be useful to the salvation of many. For far be it from thee, that in thy house there should be respect of persons, since thou RATHER HAST CHOSEN THE WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD, TO COMPOUND THE STRONG, AND BASE THINGS OF THE WORLD, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.[†] What a treasure had the heart and tongue of Victorinus been to Satan! well did it become thy sons to exult, because our King had bound the strong man, and they saw his goods to be taken from him, and cleansed, and fitted for thy honour, and to every good work.

Hearing these things from Simplician, I was inflamed with a desire of imitation. But after he had informed me farther, that Victorinus, on occasion of Julian's prohibitory law, had given up his professorship, I found an inclination to imitate him, bound as I was to the same calling, not by a foreign chain, but by my own iron will. The enemy held my will, thence formed my chain, and held me fast. From a perverse will was formed lust, from the indulgence of lust was formed habit, and habit unresisted became necessity. Of such links was my chain of slavery composed; and the new will, which was beginning in me, to worship thee freely, and enjoy thee, my sole certain pleasure, was not yet strong enough to overcome the old one, hardened by custom. Thus two wills, the old and the new, the flesh and the spirit contended within me, and between them tore my very soul.[‡] Thus did I understand by my own experience what I had read, that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.[§] I indeed was actuated by both, but more by that which I approved, than by that which I disapproved. I had now, no just excuse; truth was certain to me, yet I was loth to serve thee, and was as afraid to be rid of my impediments, as I ought to have been of contracting them. My meditations on thee, were like the attempts of men desirous of awaking, but sinking again into sleep. I had not an heart to answer thee, AWAKE, THOU THAT SLEEPEST, AND ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST SHALL GIVE THEE LIGHT.[¶] By and by—shortly—let me alone a little—these were the answers of my heart. But, by and by had no bounds, and let me alone a little, went to a great length. In vain was I delighted with

* I thought a careful translation of this story was proper. It is an instance of victorinous grace, something like that which we have more at large related by Augustine concerning himself. It shows how disreputable real Christianity was among the great, even in countries, where it was the established religion, as was then the case at Rome, and what grace is needful to cause men to be willing to bear the cross of Christ, and it illustrates also some Christian customs and discipline at that time.

† 1 Cor. I.

‡ Excellent comment on Rom. vii.—a description only to be understood by experienced Christians.

§ Galat. v. where the same subject is more briefly handled: the conflict is well known to true Christians all their days, though it most strikes their minds at first. In the unconverted, it can have no existence, because the will is inclined only one way, and it is therefore quite a different thing from the conflict between reason and passion, with which it has been confounded.

¶ Ephesians v.

thy law in the inner man, when another law in my members warred against the law of my mind. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death, but thy grace through Jesus Christ our Lord?

My anxiety increasing, I daily groaned to thee, I frequented thy church as often as I had leisure from those employments, under the weight of which I groaned. Alypius was with me during his vacation from the law, which was his practice, as rhetoric was mine. Our other friend Nebrius was gone to assist Verecundus at Milan in teaching grammar, who studiously avoided attendance upon the great, that he might command leisure to improve his mind. On a certain day, Politian, an African, one of our townsmen, came to visit me and Alypius. We sat down to converse, and upon the play-table which was before us, he saw a book, opened it, and found it to be the Apostle Paul, to his great surprise; for he supposed it to have been a book relating to my profession. He, though a soldier at court, was a devout person, and congratulated me on my taste. On my informing him, how earnestly I studied those epistles, he gave me an account of Antony the Egyptian monk, a character to that hour unknown to us; he informed us also of a number of monasteries, of which we knew nothing. There was even a monastery at Milan under the care of Ambrose at that time, of which we had not heard.² When he had given a narration also of two of his companions, who suddenly gave themselves up to God in the same way, and forsook the world, I felt myself confounded. About twelve years had now elapsed from the nineteenth year of my life, when I read Cicero's Hortensius, to this time, since I had begun to seek wisdom, and I was yet at a distance from joy. In the entrance on youth, I had prayed for chastity, and had said, "Give me chastity and continence, but grant not my request immediately." For I was afraid, lest thou shouldst quickly hear my prayer, and heal this distemper of concupiscence, which I wished rather to be fully gratified than extinguished. And I had gone on perversely in depraved superstition, with a heart at enmity against thy truth, and had deferred from day to day to devote myself to thee, under the pretence that I was uncertain where the truth lay. Now that it was certain, I was still a slave, and "I hear of others, who have not studied ten or twelve years, as I have done, and who, notwithstanding, have given themselves up to God." Such were

² Should the serious reader find himself inclined to blame this monastic taste, I agree with him; but let the principle have its just praise; it originated in a desire of freedom from the temptations of the world; and let professors of godliness observe, how much the excessive indulgence of the commercial spirit prevents their own progress in our times.

my thoughts: What pains did I not take to spur my reluctant spirit! my arguments were spent, a silent trepidation remained, and I dreaded deliverance itself as death. "What is this, said I to Alypius, which you have heard? Illiterate men rise and seize heaven, while we with all our learning, are rolling in the filth of sin." In the agitation of my spirit I retired into the garden belonging to the house, knowing how evil I was, but ignorant of the good thou hadst in store for me. Alypius followed me, and we sat remote from the house, and with vehement indignation I rebuked my sinful spirit, because it would not give itself up to God. I found I wanted a will. Still was I held, and thou, in secret, wast urgent upon me with severe mercy. Vanities of vanities, my old friends, shook my vesture of flesh, and whispered, are we to part? and for ever? The evil suggestions which I felt, may thy mercy avert from the soul of thy servant! Canst thou live without us? it was said; but with less and less power? Canst not thou, on the other hand, it was suggested, do what those and these have done, not in themselves, but in the strength of the Lord? Throw thyself on him, fear not, he will not suffer thee to fall. Turn a deaf ear to the suggestions of the flesh; they speak of pleasure, but not as the law of thy God. Such was my internal controversy. When deep meditation had collected all my misery into the view of my heart, a great storm arose producing a large shower of tears. To give it vent, I rose up hastily from Alypius. The sound of my voice appeared pregnant with weeping, and he remained motionless in the same place. I prostrated myself under a fig-tree, and with tears bursting out, I spake to this effect: How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? for ever? remember not my old iniquities. For I perceived myself entangled by them. How long shall I say to-morrow? why should not this hour put an end to my slavery? Thus I spake, and wept in the bitterness of my soul, and I heard a voice as from a neighbouring house of one repeating frequently, "take up and read, take up and read." I paused, and began to think, whether I ever had heard boys use such a speech in any play, and could recollect nothing like it. I then concluded, that I was ordered from heaven, to take up the book, and read the first sentence I cast mine eyes upon. I returned hastily to the place, where Alypius was sitting; for there I had placed the book of St. Paul's Epistles. I seized it, opened, and read what first struck my eyes; "not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Nor did I choose to read any thing more, nor had I occasion. Imme-

diately at the end of this sentence, all my doubts vanished. I closed the book, and with a tranquil countenance gave it to Alypius. He begged to see what I had read, I shewed him it, and he read still further.¹ Him that is weak in the faith receive ye; which he applied to himself, as he told me. With a placid serenity and composure suitable to his character, in which he far excelled me, he joined with me in going to my mother, who now triumphed in the abundant answers given to her petitions. Thus didst thou turn her mourning into joy.

BOOK IX.

O LORD, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid, thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. Let my heart and tongue, and all my bones say, Lord, who is like unto thee? and do thou answer me, and say to my soul, I am thy salvation. Who and what am I? what evil am I not? Was it my will, or words, or deeds, that have done it? No: but thou, Lord, good and merciful, and thy right hand looking at the depth of my death, and exhausting the abyss of corruption from the bottom of my heart. The whole of my evil lay in a will, stubbornly set in opposition to thine. But where lay of old time, and from what deep secret was my free-will called out in a moment, by which I bowed my neck to thy easy yoke, and my shoulders to thy light burden, Christ Jesus, my helper and Redeemer? How sweet was it in a moment to be free from those delightful vanities, to lose which had been my dread, to part with which was now my joy! Thou ejectedst them, O my true and consummate delight, and thou enteredst in their room. O sweeter than all pleasure, but not to flesh and blood; clearer than all light, but to the inner man; higher than all honour, but not to those who are high in their own eyes. Now was my mind set free from the corroding cares of avarice and ambition and lust, and I communed in playful ease with thee, my light, my riches, my Saviour, and my God.

I determined in thy sight to give up my employments not abruptly, but gradually.² And opportunely, the vintage-vacation be-

ing at hand, I resolved to continue in my employment till that time. I was glad also, that I had an opportunity of saying to my scholars, what was true, that the care of my health, which had suffered much from fatigue, obliged me to cease from the laborious office of teaching. And to have given up the work before the vacation might have appeared arrogant and exposed me to the censure of vanity. But should any of thy servants think, that I did wrong in remaining in the chair of deceit a day longer, I will not contend. But hast not thou, most merciful Lord, washed away this, with all my other deadly sins, in the laver of regeneration?

Our friend Verecundus was seized with a distemper, and receiving baptism in the midst of it, departed this life in thy faith and fear. Not long after my conversion, my friend Nebridius also, though he had sunk into the error which takes away the proper manhood of thy Son, was recovered; and becoming a faithful Christian, in Africa his own country quitted this tabernacle of clay, and now lives in Abraham's bosom. He no more puts his ear to my mouth, but his spiritual mouth to thy fountain to receive as much wisdom as he is capable of—happy without end.

It is pleasant to me to remember and confess how thou didst teach me and my friend Alypius, in the country, where we enjoyed the affectionate and sedulous care of my mother. We were both in the capacity of catechumens, and I read with pleasure the Psalms of David. With what mingled pity and indignation did I look on the Manichees, who madly rejected the antidote of life. O that they saw the internal eternal life, which because I had tasted, I grieved, that I could not shew it to them.

The holidays being finished, I signified to my scholars, that they must provide themselves another teacher. And I wrote to Ambrose an account of my errors, and of my present desire; and begged him to recommend some part of thy word more particularly to my attention, as a proper preparative for baptism. He pointed out to me the prophet Isaiah. I apprehend, on account of his superior perspicuity in opening the Gospel. However, finding the first part of this prophet more obscure, and apprehending the rest to be similar, I deferred the reading of him, till I was more experienced in the Scriptures. The time approaching in which I must give in my name, I left the country and returned to Milan. There I received baptism with Alypius and the boy Adeodatus, the tunity. In our weakness thoroughly felt God appears. Is it to be wondered, that the saint before us proved so strong and zealous a champion of the efficacious grace of God, and was made use of to revive the clear doctrine of it in the church, and was trained up by his own experience to defend it against the subtillies of Pelagius? He who forewarned what Pelagius would introduce, in his adorable wisdom thus provided an experienced pastor of his church, who in due time should withstand his corruptions. But of this more hereafter.

¹ Rom. xiii. end, and xiv. beginning.

² I would suggest four particular remarks on the narrative of our author's conversion. 1. That it does please God in every age to distinguish some of the works of his Holy Spirit by extraordinary circumstances. It is of little consequence, to debate whether the voice heard in the garden was miraculous or not, whether literally true, or an impression on his mind. Either way it was equally from God, and sheds a lustre on the conversion of a great and eminently holy personage, who was called to testify remarkably for God in his day. 2. There is generally some master-sin, which impedes the work of God in all his people; Augustine's was sensuality, and in the mortification of that master-sin, the grace of God is peculiarly illustrated. 3. The great medium of deliverance always is, the written word of God implying of Jesus, and salvation only by putting him on through faith. 4. Man's extremity is God's oppor-

fruit of my sin. He was almost fifteen years old, and, in understanding, he exceeded many learned men. I glorify thee for thy gifts, my God; for I had nothing in the boy but sin. For that I brought him up in thy religion, thou, and thou only, inspiredst me. I looked with trembling at his prodigious genius. But thou soon removedst him from the earth, and I remember him with greater satisfaction, as I have now no anxiety for his childhood, his youth, or his manhood. Nor could I at that time be satisfied with contemplating the mystery of redemption. The hymns and songs of thy church moved my soul intensely; thy truth was distilled by them into my heart; the flame of piety was kindled, and my tears flowed for joy. This practice of singing had been of no long standing at Milan. It began about the year when Justina persecuted Ambrose. The pious people watched in the church, prepared to die with their pastor. There my mother sustained an eminent part in watching and praying. Then hymns and psalms, after the manner of the east, were sung, with a view of preserving the people from weariness; and thence the custom has spread through Christian churches.

Thou, who makest men to be of one mind in an house, unitedst to us one of our young townsmen, Euodius, who had served in the army, and was now regenerated. We determined to return to Africa, and when we were at the mouth of the Tiber, my mother departed this life. I must not pass by the conceptions of my soul concerning her, who endured labour for my temporal birth, and laboured in heart for my spiritual birth. She had been brought up in a Christian family, but did not so much commend her mother's care, as that of a decrepid old servant of the house, who had nursed her father, whose years and character were highly respected, and who superintended the education of her master's daughters. She never suffered them to drink even water, except at meals, telling them, that if ever they became mistresses, the custom of drinking would remain, but they would then indulge it in wine, not water. Yet my mother Monica, notwithstanding the care of this provident governess, when young had learned by degrees to drink wine, having been sent to draw it for the use of the family. By what method was she delivered from this snare? Thou providedst for her a malignant reproach from a maid of the house, who, in a passion, called her drunkard. From that moment she gave up the practice for ever. Thus didst thou prepare a cure for her evil practice, by the malevolent railing of another, that no man may attribute it to his own power, if his admonitions of another be attended with salutary effect.*

* I could not prevail with myself to pass over altogether this, and a few more circumstances of domestic life,

After her marriage with my father Patricius, she endeavoured to win him over to thy service by the amiableness of her manners, and patiently bore the injuries of his unfaithfulness. She still looked for thy mercy, that, learning to believe in thee, he might become chaste. His temper was passionate, but his spirit benevolent. She knew how to bear with him when angry, by a perfect silence and composure; and when she saw him cool, would meekly expostulate with him. Many matrons in her company would complain of the blows and harsh treatment they received from their husbands, whose tempers were yet milder than those of Patricius; whom she would exhort to govern their tongues, and remember the inferiority of their condition. And when they expressed their astonishment, that it was never heard that Patricius, a man of so violent a temper, had beaten his wife, or that they ever were at variance a single day, she informed them of her plan. Those who followed it, thanked her for the good success of it; those who did not, experienced vexation. Her mother-in-law, at first, was irritated against her by the whispers of servants. But she overcame her by mild obsequiousness, inasmuch that she at length informed her son of the slanders of those backbiters, and desired that they might be restrained. Thus she and her mother-in-law lived in perfect harmony. It was a great gift, which, O my God, thou gavest to her, that she never repeated any of the fierce things, which she heard from persons who were at variance with one another, and was conscientiously exact, in saying nothing but what might tend to heal and to reconcile.

I might have been tempted to think this a small good, had I not known by grievous experience the innumerable evils resulting to society from the contrary spirit, by which men extend mischief like a pestilence, not only repeating the words of angry enemies to angry enemies, but also adding what never had been said; whereas the human mind should not be content with negative goodness in such cases, but should endeavour to promote peace by speaking what is good, as my amiable mother did, through the effectual teaching of thy Spirit. At length, in the extremity of life, she gained her husband to thee, and he died in the faith of Christ.

It was through thy secret appointment, that she and I stood alone at a window facing the east, in a house at the mouth of the Tiber, where we were preparing ourselves for our voyage. Our discourse was highly agreeable, and forgetting the past, we endeavoured to conceive aright the nature of the eternal life of the saints. It was evi-

which follow. Let the piety and prudence, which thy breaths, compensate for their simplicity. To a serious mind they will perhaps appear, not only, not contemptible, but even also instructive.

dent to us, that no carnal delights deserved to be named on this subject; erecting our spirits inordinately, we ascended above the noblest parts of the material creation to the consideration of our own minds, and passing above them; we attempted to reach heaven itself, to come to thee, by whom all things were made. There our hearts were enamoured, and there we held fast the first fruits of the Spirit, and returned to the sound of our own voice, which gave us an emblem of the Divine Word. We said, if a man should fide the flesh, the imagination, and every tongue to be silent, all having confessed their Maker, and afterwards holding their peace, and if he should now apply his ear to him who made them, and God alone should speak, not by any emblems or created things, but by himself, so that we could hear his Word, should this be continued, and other visions be withdrawn, and this alone, seize and abate the spectator for ever, is not this the meaning of, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?" At that moment the world appeared to us of no value: and she said, Son, I have now no delight in life. What I should do here, said why I am here, I know not, the hope of this life being quite spent. One thing only, your conversion, was an object for which I wished to live. My God has given me this, in larger measure. What do I here? Scarce five days after, she fell into a fever. A brother of mine who was with us lamented, that she was likely to die in a foreign land. She looked at him with anxiety to see him so travelling in his conceptions, and then looking at me, said, Place this body any where; do not distress yourselves concerning it. I could not but rejoice and give thee thanks, that she was delivered from that anxiety, with which I knew she always had been agitated in regard to a sepulchre, which she had provided for herself, and prepared near the body of her husband. I knew not the time, when, by the fulness of thy grace, she had been rid of this emptiness, but I rejoiced to find this evidence of it. I heard afterwards, that while we were at Ostia she had discoursed with some friends in my absence concerning the contempt of life, and they, expressing their surprise that she did not fear to leave her body so far from her own country; nothing, said she, is far to God, and I do not fear, that he should not know where to find me at the resurrection. She departed this life on the ninth day of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the thirty-third of mine.

* MOTH. XXV. In Rev. xxi. 23. the same sublime thought is described under the medium of sight, which here is conveyed under the medium of hearing.

† In what follows to the end of this book, the Author gives a very amiable picture of the filial affections, tempered by piety and resignation, which he felt on this occasion, not indeed without a mixture of the superstition of praying for the dead, which was growing in this century. In him the evangelical spirit, however, predomi-

BOOK X.

Now, Lord, my groaning testifies that I am displeased with myself; but thou art light and pleasure and art loved and desired, that I may blush for myself, and throw away myself, and choose thee; and neither attempt to please thee, nor myself, but by depending on thee. For when I am wicked, this is nothing else, but to confess that I am displeased with myself; and when godly, this is nothing else, but to confess that thou affordest that gift to me. The confessions of my past evils, which thou hast forgiven, changing my mind by faith and thy baptism, when they are read and heard, excite the heart, that it sink not in despair, but may watch in the love of thy mercy; and the sweetness of thy grace, by which the weak is made strong, who, by it, is brought to feel his own weakness. But what advantage will result from my confessing, as I now propose, not what I was, but what I now am? I will discover myself to such as will rejoice over me for what is good, and will pray for and sympathize with me in regard to what is evil, more secure as I am, through thy mercy, than my innocence. I am a little child, but my Father always lives, and is my sufficient guardian. What temptations I can or cannot resist, I know not. But my hope is this, that thou art faithful, that thou dost not suffer us to be tempted, above that we are able, but with the temptation also maketh a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Lord, I love thee; thou hast smitten my heart with thy Word, and I have loved thee. But what do I love, when I love thee? not the heavens and the earth, nor any created beauty. They cry aloud, we are not God, he made us. Where shall I find thee, but in thyself above me? Too late did I love thee; thou PRIMUMVAL Beauty. Thou callest aloud, and overcamest my deafness. Thou shonest and dispelledst my darkness. Thou wast fragrant, and I panted after thee. I tasted, and hungered and thirsted after thee: thou touchdest me, and I was inflamed into thy peace. When I shall stick wholly to thee, I shall no more have pain and fatigue, and my whole life shall live full of thee. But now because thou supportest him whom thou fillest, because I am not full of thee, I am a burden to myself. My wholesome griefs and pernicious pleasures contend together, and I know not on which side the victory stands. Woe is me! Thou art my physician, I am sick. Thou art merciful, I am wretched. All my hope lies in thy

notes extremely, even while he is indulging the superstitious. But let it suffice to have given this general account.

† 1 Cor. x.

immense mercy. Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt. Thou commandest us to keep from the lust of the flesh, from the lust of the eyes, and from the pride of life. And what thou commandest, thou hast given me. Yet there still live in my memory the images of evils, to which I had been habituated, and they occur to me even in sleep. Is not thy hand, O God, able to heal all the diseases of my soul, and to sanctify even the hours of rest? I would rejoice with trembling in what thou hast given me, and mourn over that which is imperfect, and hope that thou wilt perfect thy mercies, when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

There is another evil of the day, and I wish the day may be sufficient for it. We refresh the continual ruins of the body by food, till this corruptible shall put on incorruption. Thou hast taught me to use allment as medicine. But while I am passing from the uneasiness of hunger to the rest of satiety; in the very passage the snare of concupiscence is laid for me; and the bounds of innocence are not easily defined, and a pretence for indulgence is made on that very account. These temptations I daily endeavour to resist, and I call on thy right hand for my salvation, and make known to thee my agitations of soul, because I am not yet clear on this subject. I hear my God, "let not your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness." The latter is far from me, let it not approach me; the former sometimes steals upon me, keep it at a distance from me. Who is there, Lord, that is perfectly temperate? Whoever he be, let him magnify thy name. But I am not he, I am a sinful man. However I magnify thy name, and he who overcame the world, and numbers me among the weak members of his body, intercedes for my sins.

In regard to the enticement of smells, I am not solicitous. When they are absent, I want them not; when present I do not refuse them, content to be without them entirely. So I think; but such is my miserable darkness, that I must not easily credit myself, because, what is within, generally lies hid, till experience evidence it. The only hope, the only confidence, the only firm promise, is thy mercy.

The pleasures of the ear have deeper hold on me. I find, even while I am charmed with sacred melody, I am led astray at times by the luxury of sensations, and offend, not knowing at the time, but afterwards I discover it. Sometimes guarding against this fallacy, I err in the other extreme, and could wish all the melody of David's Psalms were removed from my ears

and those of the church, and think it safer to imitate the plan of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who directed a method of repeating the psalms more resembling pronunciation than music. But when I remember my tears of affection at my conversion under the melody of thy church, with which I am still affected, I again acknowledge the utility of the custom. Thus do I fluctuate between the danger of pleasure, and the experience of utility, and am more induced, though with a wavering assent, to own that the infirmity of nature may be assisted in devotion by psalmody. Yet when the tune has moved me more than the subject, I feel guilty, and am ready to wish I had not heard the music. See where I am, and mourn with me, ye who are conscious of any inward feelings of godliness. I cannot expect the sympathy of those who are not. Thou, Lord my God, hear and pity and heal me.

The pleasures of the eye I find to entangle me from time to time. But thou deliverest me, sometimes without pain, because I fall into them gently; at other times with pain, because I stick in them.

Another form of manifold danger is added, a curious spirit, palliated by the name of knowledge. Surrounded as we are with objects, when can I say I am freed from this? What vehement temptations have I had from the enemy to ask of thee a sign? But I beseech thee by our king Jesus Christ, that, as I am far from consenting to it, so I may be farther and farther. What a trifle diverts me from a thought of great importance, and unless thou quickly admonish me by the conviction of my infirmity, either to divert the thought by some serious meditation, or to despise it altogether, I should become absolutely dull. My life is full of these evils, and even my prayers are often disturbed, and while I apply my heart to thine ears, I am overborn by a torrent of vanities.

What can give hope, except thy mercy, by which thou hast begun to renew us? And thou knowest how much thou hast done for me already. I carry thy yoke, and find it easy, as thou hast promised. It always was so, but I did not believe it, when I was afraid to take it upon me: but can I, O Lord, who alone rulest without pride because thou hast no superior, can I in this life be exempt from pride? Well done, well done, I find scattered in the nets by the enemy everywhere. Daily, Lord, we feel these temptations. Thou knowest, on this head, the groans of my heart, and the floods of mine eyes. Nor can I easily see, that I grow more free from this pest of pride; and I much fear my secret evils, which thou knowest. I am poor and needy, and my best method is to seek thy mercy in secret groans and in self-abhorrence, till thou perfect that which concerneth me.

There is another internal evil, by which a

man, without seeking to please others, pleases himself with thy good things, as if they were his own; or if he allows them to be thine, yet he is apt to fancy them bestowed upon him for his own merits; or he pleases himself with indulging an invidious spirit against others. In all these dangers thou seest the trembling of my heart; I feel my wounds healed every now and then by thee; but I feel not an exemption from them. Sometimes thou introducest me into an uncommon affection, into a sweetness past the power of description, which, were it perfected in me, I should not see what life would want to complete its felicity. But I sink back by the weight of misery, and am held entangled.

Whom shall I look to as my mediator? Shall I go to angels? Many have tried this, and have been fond of visions, and have deserved to be the sport of the illusions which they loved. A mediator between God and man must have the nature of both. The true Mediator, whom in thy secret mercy thou hast shewn to the humble, and hast sent, that by his example they might also learn humility, the man Christ Jesus hath appeared a mediator between mortal sinners and the immortal Holy One, that because the wages of righteousness is life and peace; by his divine righteousness he might justify the ungodly, and deliver them from death. He was shewn to ancient saints, that they might be saved by faith in his future sufferings, as we by faith in the same sufferings already past. How hast thou loved us, Father, delivering up thy only Son for us ungodly? For whom he, our priest and sacrifice, who thought it no robbery to be equal with thee, was subjected to death. Well may my hope be strong through such an intercessor; else, I should despair. Many and great are my diseases, thy medicine larger still. Were he not made flesh for us, we could not dream of having any union with him. Terrified with my sins and the weight of my misery, I was desponding, but thou encouragedst me, saying, Christ died for all, that they which live, should not live to themselves, but to him that died for them.* Lo, I cast all my care on thee, Lord, that I may live. Thou knowest my weakness and ignorance, teach and heal me. He hath redeemed me with his blood, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Let not the proud calumniate me, if with the poor I desire to eat and be satisfied, and to praise the Lord.†

* 2 Cor. v.

† Psalm xciii. 26. We see in this last book the author's description of the conflict between flesh and spirit after his conversion, and the repose of his soul for peace and happiness only on the Lord Jesus as his righteousness and strength. I shall make no further remarks than to repeat his own observation in his retractions. "These confessions praise the God of righteousness and goodness, and excite the human understanding and affection toward him. They did this in me while I was writing them, and they do it still when I read them."

Augustine, after his conversion, returned with some friends into Africa, and lived upon his own estate for almost three years, retired from the world. A desire to oblige a person of some consequence in Hippo, who requested his instructions, brought him at length to that city, where Valerius was bishop,—a person of great piety; but, on account of his slender acquaintance with the Latin tongue, scarce adequate to the office of pastor in that place. Augustine, through the strong and urgent desires of the people, was ordained presbyter to Valerius; but wept on the occasion from the genuine sense which he had of the importance of the office. He told Possidius that his tears were by some misconstrued, as if he regretted that he had not been chosen bishop. Such poor judges are many of the views and sensations of godly men! Valerius rejoiced that God had heard his prayers, and that the people would now be supplied with such a pastor. He gave him license to preach in the presence of the bishop, a thing before unknown in Africa; but which, from the good effects of this precedent, afterwards grew common. Here his ministry was useful in the instruction and edification of the brethren, and also in the defeat of various heresies. Divine truth, which had been almost buried amidst many schisms and distractions in Africa, now raised up its head again; and Fortunatus, the great leader of the Manichees, was obliged, in confusion, to leave Hippo, when he found himself, by the confession of the hearers, vanquished in a conference with Augustine.

Heretics vied with the members of the general church in their attention to the pastoral labours of Augustine; whose fame began gradually to spread throughout the western world. Valerius rejoiced and gave thanks on the account, and being solicitous to preserve such a treasure to his church, he took care to get Augustine elected bishop of Hippo, in conjunction with himself. Age and infirmities rendered Valerius very inadequate to the work; and every true Christian will doubt which more to admire, the godly zeal of Augustine, tempered with modesty and charity, or the unfeigned humility of Valerius. Augustine, after he had strongly resisted the inclinations of the bishop and all the church, at length accepted the office; the duties of which he continued to discharge after the decease of Valerius. His zeal and laboriousness increased with his authority. The monastery of his institution became re-

What others may think of them let them judge; but I know they have much pleased and do please many of the brethren."

* Possid. Life of Aug.

nowned in Africa; and about ten bishops, of undoubted piety, known to our Author, came from this seminary. These instituted monasteries after the same pattern, and from them other churches were supplied with pastors; and the doctrines of faith, hope, and charity, by these means, and also by Augustine's writings, which were translated into the Greek tongue, were diffused and enforced with increasing vigour through the Christian world. His writings, however, never seem to have had any permanent influence in the eastern church.

CHAPTER III.

THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY.

It is the part of an intelligent agent to choose the fittest season for the execution of arduous enterprises, or the introduction of important innovations. This rule, we may safely conclude, is observed by Satan in all his attempts against the church of Christ. While the belief and experience of divine influences were strong and vigorous in Christian societies, it was in vain for him to attempt to persuade men, that such influences were of no necessity or value: he could do no more than seduce them to counterfeit, abuse, or misapply them. Hence the wildness and incoherence of Montanism. But now that the holy influence of the Spirit of God was generally stamped by superstition, or quenched by licentiousness, Satan felt himself emboldened to erect a new heresy, which should pretend to the height of purity, supported by MERE HUMAN NATURE, exclusive of the operations of divine grace altogether. This was Pelagianism: and as this evil now entered the church for the first time, and in a greater or less degree has continued to this day; as it is directly subversive of Christianity itself, and as it introduced a controversy, not trivial and frivolous, like many others, but of unspeakable importance, it eminently falls within the plan of this history, to state the circumstances and consequences with perspicuity.

Augustine, of Hippo, had been trained up under the Lord's wholesome discipline, by an extraordinary conversion, as we have seen, during the latter part of the last century. Thus did the all-wise God, who is WONDERFUL IN COUNSEL AND EXCELLENT IN WORK, secretly stir up a scourge for Pelagius against the time that he should make his appearance; and his heresy was eventually one grand means of introducing juster

views of gospel-grace, than had for a long time obtained in the church, and of reviving Christian truth, humility, and piety. The effects of this effusion of the Spirit were solid, though never brilliant, operative during this century, and many centuries afterwards, in the production of much real godliness on the minds of many individuals, particularly, of monastic persons, to whom, for ages, Augustine's writings were a great and useful light, indeed, next to the word of God, the greatest means of grace which they had in times extremely unfavourable to improvement. Hence, besides the immediate benefit which the church received in his own time, the utility of this providential dispensation reached to the time of the reformation itself, and even beyond it in Popish countries; though the reader must not expect any great or strong display of the plantation of new churches, or any sudden and marvellous change in the external appearance of the church. The light we are now to contemplate never broke out into a vivid extensive flame, but shone with faint, though steady rays, with a moderate degree of brightness at first, but afterwards glimmered through many ages.

Pelagius was born in Britain, and was in his own time called Brito.² His companion Coelestius was an Irishman, by the testimony of Jerom. He calls him a Scot, and that name in those times meant, as is known to the learned, a native of Ireland. They were both laymen; the former, by profession, a monk, who, as far as appears, always maintained a character of fair and decent morals. In the heat of contention there were who denied this; but it is admitted by Augustine, with his usual candour, and we might have been certain of it, independently of his authority; because otherwise it would have been impossible for him ever to have become a person of lasting reputation in the religious world. He appears to have travelled from monastery to monastery, through various parts of the Empire. His heretical opinions did not appear till he was far advanced in life; before that time Augustine owns (though he speaks by hearsay) his reputation for serious piety to have been

² I make large use of Jansenius in this narrative: he has prefixed the history of the heresy to his treatise called Augustine. The accounts seem accurate, and well supported by authorities of contemporary writers, particularly Jerom and Augustine. I have consulted these two with much care and attention, and I find Jansenius so exact and well-informed in those things of which we have an opportunity to form an estimate, that it seems reasonable to give him credit for his extracts from the *Gesta Pelag.* of Aug.—a work which we have not in the common editions of that father, because it was not discovered till about the time of Jansenius, being found, as he tells us, in an Abbey at Foule, in Italy.

Since I wrote this, I have seen the *Gesta Pelag.* in a more recent edition of Augustine, and am still further confirmed in my opinion of the accurate industry of Jansenius.

³ *Posed.*

⁴ In this chapter I purpose to describe its rise and progress historically. What I have said of its precise nature, will be confirmed in the proper place by the authentic lights of antiquity.

great in the Christian world; and those who know the difference between holiness and mere morality will not be surprised at this. Augustine allows the genius and capacity of both these men to have been of the first order: and this testimony from him is decisive with me against that of Jerom, who treats the understanding and endowments of both with great contempt; but Jerom was not apt to allow any laudable qualities to an *adversary*.

Indice of Pelagianism applies to Pelagius that passage of Hosea; "gray hairs are increased there upon him, and he knoweth it not." This author is under nothod chance to intimate, that he fell into this heresy in old age. It began to appear about the year 404 or 406. Chrysostom, writing to his friend, the deaconness Olympias, says, "I am much grieved for Pelagius the monk; consider what crowns must be reserved for those who stand firm, when men who have lived in so much mortification and continency, appear to be so carried away." His first writings were an Epistle to Paulinus of Nola, and other little works, in which his enormous views of grace were so artfully expressed, and so guarded with cautious terms, that Augustine owns he was almost deceived by them. But when he saw his other writings of a later date, he discerned that he might artfully own the word GRACE, and, by retaining the term, break the force of prejudice, and avoid offence, and yet conceal his meaning under a general ambiguity.

For, by a dexterity very common with heretics, Pelagius, while he laid open to his converts the whole mystery of his doctrine, imparted only so much to others as might be more calculated to ensnare their affections than to inform them of his real opinions. He used to deliver his views under the modest appearance of queries, started against the doctrines of the church, and those as not invented by himself, but by others. The effect of poisoning the minds of men was, however, perhaps more powerfully produced by this, than it would have been by a more direct and positive method. To this he added another artifice; he insinuated himself into the favour of women of some rank, of weak minds, and unacquainted with the spirit of the gospel, though professing religion; and, by their means, he diffused his tenets with much success. Coelestius, more open and daring in speech, pursued a method not so replete with deceit, and was therefore exposed to detection more easily than his master.

Pelagius, having travelled over the monasteries of Egypt, settled at length at Rome, where his attempts to undermine the whole doctrine of divine grace, by degrees, notwithstanding all his caution, gave um-

brage to the church. Unguarded moments also will happen to the most artful, and at times discover them to the most unwary. A bishop, who was a colleague of Augustine, mentioning to Pelagius those words of the Confessions, "Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt;" he contradicted with great vehemence, and expressed much indignation at the sentiment.

Rome being taken by the Goths about the year 410, numbers fled into Africa, and among the rest the two heresiarchs. Pelagius was received at Hippo, in Augustine's absence, where his stay was very short. The Bishop of Hippo saw him once or twice at Carthage; but was himself very busy in settling a conference with the Donatists, and nothing material passed between them. Pelagius leaving Africa passed over into Palestine: there his labours attracted the attention of Jerom, who lived a monastic life in the same country, and wrote against his opinions, justly calling on him to speak clearly what he meant, and complaining of his ambiguities.

In the mean time Coelestius in Africa more openly discovered his sentiments, and made such attempts to propagate them in Carthage itself, that he was summoned to appear before a synod, which was held by Aurelius, bishop of that city. He was accused of denying original sin, and when he was pressed with the custom of the church in baptizing infants, as a proof of her belief in all ages that infants needed redemption, he declared that they had no need of remission, and yet ought to be baptized, that they might be sanctified in Christ. Coelestius was condemned as an heretic in the year 412, and disappointed of his hopes of rising in the church; for he had either obtained or was about to obtain the office of a presbyter, in Africa.

A fragment of the acts of this synod is preserved by Augustine, though he himself was not present at it, in which is the following passage: "Aurelius said, read what follows, and it was read; that the sin of Adam hurt himself alone, and not mankind." Coelestius said, I owned that I was dubious concerning the communication of sin by descent from Adam; (yet in such a manner, that I shall bow to the authority of those to whom God hath given the grace of superior skill;) because I have heard different things from those who at least were presbyters in the church. Paulinus a deacon said, name them. Coelestius answered, the holy presbyter* Rufinus, at Rome: I heard him deny any com-

* In his book on Original Sin, Chap. 5.

This is he, who was famous for his controversy with Jerom, and for the translation of Origen's works, and of whom, though he seems to be not much in the view of our history, we shall have occasion to say a little more hereafter.

munication of sin by descent. Being pressed, if he could name any more, he said, "is not one priest sufficient?" On being asked, whether he had not asserted, that infants are born in the state in which Adam was before transgression, all that could be obtained from him was, "that infants needed baptism, and ought to be baptized."^a

Indeed Pelagianism itself seemed little more than a revival of Deism, or what is commonly called natural religion. Adam, it was said, would have died, whether he sinned or not. Men might be saved by the law, as well as the gospel: infants just born are in the same state as Adam before transgression. Men's death depends not on that of Adam, nor does their resurrection depend on that of Christ. These tenets were objected to Cœlestius, and condemned. In a book which he offered to the council, he owned that children were redeemed by Christ, and yet would not confess that the effects of Adam's sin passed upon them. So inconsistent are men, bent on the support of error, and yet willing to appear in some measure, Christian!

In the mean time Pelagius, in his manner, was still writing against the doctrines of the gospel, while Augustine, than whom no man was ever more cautious and deliberate in the whole controversy, answered in his writings the evil tendency of the Pelagian tenets, avoiding, says he,^b the name of Pelagius, thinking that I might more easily profit him, if, preserving friendship, I should yet spare his modesty. But more of this hereafter.

Cœlestius driven from Africa, fixed his seat in Sicily, and by the questions which he there excited, gave occasion to Augustine to employ his pen in answering him. Nor did the heresy cease in Africa: the bishop of Hippo was employed not only in writing, but also in preaching against the new notions, and gave his testimony in a solemn manner from the pulpit at Carthage.

Pelagius himself wrote in the most respectful manner to Augustine, and in the highest terms extolled his character. It is certain, that the impressions made on Augustine's mind in favour of Pelagius were strong, and not easily erased, because he had been taught to believe him to be a person of great virtue. Nothing but the completest evidence of heresy could have induced him to make an open rupture. And a soul like his, humble and charitable in a high degree, would, I doubt not, be long entertaining the

best hopes of a man, whom he had once esteemed. In this spirit he wrote to him the following guarded letter.

"I thank you for your kind letter. The Lord requite you good, by which you may be ever good, and live with the Eternal for ever. Though I cannot own the good things in myself, which your friendly Epistle mentions, yet I should be ungrateful did I not thank you; at the same time admonishing you, that you would rather pray for me, that I may become such from the Lord as you think me to be."

In the year 413 an occasion was offered to Pelagius of discovering himself more openly to the world. A virgin, named Demetrias, of the illustrious race of the Anicii, one of the most ancient and noble families of Rome, having fled into Africa on account of the invasion of the Goths, was, by the exhortation of Augustine, induced to consecrate her virginity to God. The piety of the action was extolled in these superstitious days by all the Christian world, and the bishop of Hippo joined with others in congratulating her. For sufficient proof has already appeared, that he escaped not the infection of the age, though he mixed with it as much real humility as most persons of those times. Pelagius wrote to her a long and extremely elegant letter, exhorting her to seek true perfection, in which he plainly directs her to look to nature, not to grace for strength: yet, it is written with so much artifice, that in his apology afterwards to Innocent, bishop of Rome, he appeals to it as a justification of his orthodoxy.^c Augustine, some years after, wrote a refutation of it, addressed to Juliana, the mother of Demetrias. Pelagius wrote also another letter to a certain widow, full of the same adulatory strains, in which he so grossly discovers himself, that, as will shortly appear, he had no way left but to disown it.

In the year 415, or nearly so, two well-disposed young men, Timasius and Jacob, meeting with Pelagius, were by him induced to enter on the monastic life, in the commendation of which all parties were but too strongly agreed. But they imbibed also his self-righteous doctrine, from which, however, by the labours of Augustine, they were afterwards delivered. On this occasion, they shewed Augustine a book of Pelagius, in which he vehemently accused those who pleaded the faultiness of human nature as an excuse for their sins, and in which, while he seemed to be only inveighing against a licentious abuse of gospel-grace, he evidently denied the existence of all grace, and maintained, that by that term were to be understood the natural endowments of the human mind SEASONED and directed by free will; and these endowments, so seasoned

^a Two plain inferences seem deducible from this fragment: 1. That the right of baptizing infants was allowed on all sides to have been of apostolical and primitive authority. It is impossible, that men so shrewd and learned as Cœlestius and his master, would not have objected to the novelty of infant-baptism, had it been a novelty. 2. The belief of original sin had universally obtained, and must have been equally apostolical. One presbyter only could be named by Cœlestius, as favouring the doctrine of Pelagius, in his opinion.

^b Lib. de Gestis Pelag.

^c A farther view of this letter shall be given hereafter, among what may be called the PELAGIAN PAPERS.

and directed, he acknowledged to be the free gifts of God. The bishop of Hippo, with extreme reluctance, at length admitted the full conviction of the heretical character of Pelagius, and answered the book; yet he concealed his name, lest Pelagius being offended, might become still more incurable. Augustine owns, that he afterwards repented of this step, because he had probably increased the pride of the heretic, through an ill-judged fear of giving him pain.

For Pelagius hearing of Augustine's proceedings, loudly complained, that some of his books had been stolen from him; and others reckoned as his which were not so. It is difficult to deal with deceitful men; yet the African bishop used the most prudent method. He sent his own book and Pelagius's together to Innocent, of Rome, desiring him to mark the sentiments of each, "and if he denies that these are his sentiments, I contend not, let him anathematize them, and in plain terms confess the doctrine of Christian grace. I have, says he, sufficient witnesses, men who have a great regard for him, who will attest that I had the book from them, and that it has not been falsified by me." Innocent, in reply, condemned the book altogether, as containing horrible sentiments hitherto unprecedented in the Christian world. How much more reputable would it be to the characters of many, like Pelagius, would they at once own what they are, and make no pretensions to the doctrines of grace! But this sincerity would not so effectually serve the cause of Satan in the world.

While Jerom in the East, and Augustine in the West, were opposing Pelagianism, the heresiarch himself was summoned to appear in the latter end of the same year 415, before a synod of fourteen bishops of Palestine, at Lydda, then called Diospolis. Here he had every advantage, which an accused person could wish for. His two accusers, Heros and Lazarus, bishops of Gaul, were absent, because one of them was sick at that time. The court were poorly acquainted with the Latin tongue, in which the works of Pelagius were written, and John, of Jerusalem, one of the principal bishops, was prejudiced in favour of Origenism, and of Pelagius. The Eastern church itself was more corrupt in doctrine, and more inclined to support innovations than the Western; and the heresiarch himself, in capacity, presence of mind, and circumspection, far exceeded all his judges.

Yet the letter to the widow above-mentioned was so fulsome, and so replete with self-righteous doctrine, that he found it necessary to deny, that he had written the things imputed to him. He had described her as the only righteous person upon earth, with whom piety found a refuge, when it

could find none elsewhere; and he taught her to pray in this form: "Thou knowest, Lord, how holy, innocent, and clean these hands are which I extend to thee; how just and clean these lips, and free from all guile, with which I pray for thy mercy." In no part of his conduct did he lay himself more open to censure. He preached a perfection, attainable in this life, beyond the bounds of that sobriety and humility which become Christians, and a perfection too drawn altogether from nature. However, by denying this charge, and by dexterously evading and explaining away all the rest,^a he obtained an honourable acquittal. If there was any fault at all in the conduct of Augustine toward this man, it was a fault indeed of the most amiable kind, an excess of tenderness and lenity. Pelagius knew how to take advantage of it, and produced to the court the short letter of the bishop of Hippo to him, which has been given above.

John, bishop of Jerusalem, defended Pelagius in the synod with great earnestness, and he was at last received as a Christian brother. Flushed with his victory, he prepared to improve the advantage which it gave him. Though he was acquitted, as holding the doctrines of grace, and not as inimical to them, he wrote to a friend, that fourteen bishops had agreed with him, that man might be without sin, and easily keep the commands of God, if he would; concealing at the same time his confession of the necessity of divine grace, by which he had eluded condemnation. With similar artifice he transmitted an account to Augustine of his acquittal: he wrote also four books on free-will, in which he openly took away original sin, and gloried at the same time in the acts of the synod in Palestine. And his partizans, being incensed against Jerom and the Roman ladies who lived in monasteries under his direction in Palestine, made a scandalous assault upon them, of which Jerom complained to Innocent of Rome, who afterwards expostulated with John, bishop of Jerusalem, for conniving at the burnings and plunderings of which the Pelagians had been guilty. Augustine also wrote to John in a mild but firm tone, to undeceive him concerning the real doctrines of Pelagius, and sent him both his own treatise on nature and grace and that of Pelagius; and receiving afterwards the acts of the synod of Diospolis he published the history of Pelagianism, from which we have taken many of the foregoing particulars.

A council being held the next year at Carthage on various exigencies of the church, Orosius, returning from Palestine, brought them the letters of Heros and Lazarus against Pelagius. Though the acts of the

^a Gest. Pelag. The recital of the particulars would be tedious and uninteresting.

Eastern council had not yet reached this African synod, yet they had now sufficient information to alarm their minds. The council wrote to Innocent of Rome their plain sense of the controversy, which was—that unless Pelagius and his partisans, in express terms, rejected the sentiments ascribed to him, they should be excommunicated, to prevent others from being imposed on by false pretensions." These equitable determinations were signed by sixty-eight bishops. Another synod of Numidian bishops, assembled at Milevum, wrote also to Rome to the same effect. Augustine also, his friend Alypius now bishop of Tagasta, Aurelius of Carthage, and two other bishops wrote letters in their own names to Innocent, more distinctly explaining the subject, and shewing how the Eastern council most probably had been imposed on by the subtlety of Pelagius; at the same time intimating their fear, lest Rome itself, where he had long lived, should be infected with the heresy. Innocent, in his answer, entered fully into the views of the Africans, and in the same conditional manner condemned the authors of the heresy. As it however still spread in a secret manner, it needed to be extirpated by argument. For this the bishop of Hippo was peculiarly qualified. And for more than twenty years he was employed in writing and preaching against the heresy.

The two heresiarchs now endeavoured to elude the force of the decrees against them. Coelestius, who had been in Asia for some time, and had obtained the office of presbyter, visited Rome in the year 417. He applied to Zosimus, the successor of Innocent, and recited his libel before him. And here, with an unlimited degree of complaisance, he submitted his sentiments implicitly to the bishop of Rome, professing a desire to be corrected by him, if as a man he erred in any point, and complained of the precipitation, with which he had been condemned.

Zosimus, deceived by his artifices, wrote to the African prelates, complaining of the malice of the Gathish bishops, and declaring, that unless within two months he heard more decisive proofs against Coelestius, he should consider him as a Christian brother. The African bishops in reply, complained of the precipitation of Zosimus, and at length sent to Rome such complete proofs against Coelestius, that he withdrew himself from the

examination, and avoided the means of a public detection. Zosimus however still delayed his condemnation, for which he is justly blamed by Augustine.

Pelagius using the same methods which Coelestius did, wrote to Innocent, with whose death he was unacquainted. Some fragments of his letters are preserved by Augustine. A sample of them is as follows: "Lo, let this epistle clear me before you, in which I say that we have a free-will to sin and not to sin, which in all good works is always helped by divine aid." And "this power we say is in all in general, in Christians, Jews, and Gentiles. In all there is free-will equally by nature, but in Christians alone it is helped by grace. In those there is a good condition, naked and unarmed; in these who belong to Christ, it is fortified by his assistance. Persons therefore are to be condemned, who, when they have free-will, by which they might come to faith, and obtain the grace of God, abuse their liberty: but those are to be rewarded, who, using a right free-will, obtain the favour of God, and keep his commands." He adds more to the same purpose, never once either admitting the doctrine of original sin, or defining what he means by divine assistance, which with him may mean no more than the benefit of external revelation, or the preservation of our natural powers. Had he once expressly declared, that he did not believe any real influence of divine grace on the mind inclining it to what is good, which he knew the Christian world before his time believed, and which, if he himself had believed, he would have expressed; there would have been an honesty in his heretical pravity, which would have entitled his character to a greater degree of respect. As the case stands, and, as he must have known that his opponent used the terms grace and divine assistance in a quite different sense from that in which he used them, he appears by his own words to have been an insincere disputant. He sent also to Rome a symbol of his faith, written in the same style of ambiguity, and attended with the same adulatory strains to the bishop of Rome, which Coelestius had used on the like occasion.

Zosimus, to whom his letters came, was imposed on by them, as he had been by those of Coelestius; and he wrote to the African bishops, that he was convinced, that Pelagius was innocent. The latter answered him very properly, that it was not sufficient for Pelagius and Coelestius to own in general that they approved of all that he approved of; that it behoved them expressly to confess, that we need the grace of Jesus Christ, not only to know, but also to do righteousness in every act. Thus they shewed that they had, what Zosimus had not, a

* I wonder not that the advocates for the papacy have argued from these frequent appeals to Rome, for the infallibility and dominion of the Pope. But the truth is, nothing could be farther from the thoughts of the Africans. We shall see shortly that they wished and correct the errors of a Roman Bishop; nor have I seen any thing in Augustine's voluminous writings, that indicates such a subjection. The word of God was as yet allowed to be the great standard of doctrine; and the frequent correspondence with Rome arose from the importance of the situation of that church, as fixed in the metropolis of the Empire, and as being the centre of intelligence to the Christian world.

clear and accurate conception of the subject. But they had Augustine among them: whereas men, whose consciences have had little exercise on these subjects, are seldom quick in comprehending them, nay, are apt to be imposed on by plausible terms, though they be in other respects men of enlarged and cultivated understandings.

Zozimus was, however, open to conviction; for the bishops of Rome had not yet learned to be INFALLIBLE. The instructions of Augustine corrected his mistakes, and being further acquainted with the subject by some writings of Pelagius, which were brought to him at Rome, he openly condemned the two heretics. Whether he had done so or not, there is not the slightest ground to believe, that the African bishops and churches would not have persevered, by their own authority, in rejecting Pelagianism: but the concurrence of the bishop of Rome was doubtless of great service to the general cause of Christian truth at this period. It has often been said, that men called heretics have not the advantage of being heard, because their writings are not extant. I have therefore been solicitous to furnish the reader with all the light which can be obtained on that side of the question. Notwithstanding the scantiness of materials, Arius I think was sufficiently proved guilty from his own mouth, and so was Pelagius; but of the latter we have much larger remains. On this occasion it will be proper to mention a passage from his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, quoted by Zozimus, as it shews at the same time the strength of his prejudices and the shrewdness of his understanding. "If Adam's sin hurt those who were not guilty, the righteousness of Christ profits those who believe not."

The Pelagians bitterly censured Sixtus, a presbyter of Rome, afterwards bishop, for being active in condemning those whom before he had patronized. Augustine exposed their unreasonableness in reviling that very lenity and caution which had been so slow to condemn, till the fullest evidence was obtained, and admonished Sixtus not to be content with anathematizing Pelagius, but to be also laborious in warning and teaching the people.

The emperor Honorius also passed the sentence of banishment from Rome on the Pelagians the same year in which their doctrines were condemned, that is, the year 418. Celestius retired to Constantinople, where his tenets were opposed by Atticus the bishop, and his views of propagating them were disappointed. The party were, however, indefatigable; letters were written to the bishop of Thessalonica, in which they professed their desire to defend the Catholic faith against the heresy of the Manichees, and in that specious manner they vindicated their praises of the powers of human nature. Au-

gustine answered their arguments, which had been sent by eighteen of the party to Thessalonica;⁵ Atticus also wrote against them to Rome, and the sect underwent a general condemnation.

Pelagius, who was still in Palestine, complained of the treatment which he had received, and being interrogated there concerning the disputed points by some persons of respectable characters, he answered with such subtle ambiguity, that he again imposed on his examiners, who explained to Augustine in writing the result. The latter, roused by repeated acts of dissimulation, wrote his treatise on original sin and the grace of Christ, in which he detected and exposed the artifices of Pelagius. The wiles of the party were not yet exhausted: they charged the general church with condemning marriage and the workmanship of God in the creation of man; I suppose maliciously deducing those consequences from the doctrine of original sin: and this drew another reply from the argumentative pen of Augustine.⁶

One Julian, a young person of great spirit and self-confidence, now arose in defence of Pelagianism, and wrote with great vehemence and asperity, and in a very voluminous manner. He described himself as the little David, who was to fight against the Goliath of Hippos, and declared that it was proper to decide the contest by a single combat, while the rest of the church should be in peace. I love to lay open to the reader all along the connection between principle and practice; and, if I shew not the indispensible superiority of the orthodox Christians, in disposition and temper, I miss one of the most important points, which I have in view through the whole history. Indeed, the strength and excellence of Augustine's cause lies in its tendency to promote humility, while the weakness and turpitude of the Pelagian cause lies in supporting the spirit of pride. How can this be shewn better than by proving from facts, that the Pelagians were proud men, and that those, who sincerely embraced the doctrines of grace, were humble. To the boasting language of Julian, Augustine modestly replied, "Who promised you a single combat on my side? Where, when, how, who were present, who the arbiters? Far be it from me to assume to myself in the general church, what you are not ashamed to do among the Pelagians. I am one of the many, who refute your profane novelties, as we can." The most specious argument used by Julian was the use made of the imperial sanction against his party. How far the secular arm ought to

⁵ B. 1. to Boniface.

⁶ B. 6. contra Julian.

⁷ B. 1. de nup.

⁸ Apud Catholicos. In general I choose to avoid the expression of Catholics, and prefer the term general church as more proper, in opposition to the unfair use made of the word by the Papists.

be applied to the support of religion, has been already considered; and it was the duty of the magistrate then, as at all times, to determine how far the good of the people committed to his charge is connected with the spreading of opinions. I recollect, however, no account of any particular cruelties; nor does any thing more seem to have been actually done against the Pelagians by the state, than barely to inhibit the dissemination of their doctrines.²

Another argument used by Julian was drawn from the pains taken by the adversaries of Pelagius to seduce the people. Finding the vulgar every where prejudiced against the Pelagians, he speaks of the dregs of the populace stirred up against them, mariners, cooks, butchers, &c.:¹ but this is no uncommon event. The doctrines of grace, persecuted and despised, as they always have been by the great, bid fair for a more unprejudiced hearing among the poor. The common people heard our Lord gladly. The doctrines, which represent the misery of man and his need of grace, speak to the consciences of men; and these, whom deceitful learning and vain philosophy have not sophisticated, cannot but receive some impression. Pelagianism, so far as it respects the doctrines of sanctifying grace, is pretty much the same thing with that which is now called Socinianism. The abettors of the latter make the same complaints of the common people at this day; and they may thank themselves for the desertion of their congregations. Julian inscribed his writings to one Turbantius, a bishop, whom he highly commends; but this bishop afterwards forsook Pelagianism.

Notwithstanding the emperor's edict, Celestius ventured again to shew himself in Rome, and about the year 420, was again expelled by an edict. Pelagianism being now reduced to the lowest ebb, Satan seems to have changed his mode of attacking the church, by inducing some ignorant persons, under a mistaken idea of honouring the doctrines of grace, to support opinions subversive of the free agency of man, and particularly to forbid men to rebuke sinners, and direct them only to pray for their conversion.³ Augustine obviated these mistakes,

and explained the consistency between the divine grace and human duty in his treatise on rebuke and grace.

The two heresiarchs, after this, were reduced to a state which is, of all others, the most grating to proud minds, a state of obscurity. The island of Britain, it is certain, was afterwards disturbed with their doctrines, which, by the skill and authority of Germanus, whom we shall have occasion to mention hereafter, were confuted and overcome. Hence it is probable, that Pelagius, after having travelled through the Roman empire, and attempted in vain to overturn the doctrines of grace, retired to his native country. But nothing certain seems to be known further either concerning him or Celestius.

There was one Leporius, a monk, afterwards a presbyter, who boasted of his purity, and ascribed it to his own power, and not to the grace of God. The man, however, was instructed by some teachers in Gaul, and particularly by the labours of Augustine, to know himself better. In Africa he publicly owned the folly of his pride, and wrote also into Gaul a very humble confession of his self-righteousness. I know not how to obtain a sight of his writings; but they would probably give us an edifying view of the conversion of a Pharisee.⁴

If Satan cannot gain his point entirely, in aspersing the grace of God, he will be content to do it in part. And this, for the trial of men's sincerity, was unhappily the case in regard to this present controversy. Pure Pelagianism itself was lost, at least for many ages; nor did any man dare for a long series of years to revive it. The works of Augustine were found so agreeable to the Scriptures, that while they were regarded as the sole standard of Christian authority, a doctrine, which set aside the necessity of grace altogether, could gain no hearing in the church. And in the Western world such an addition of light was obtained, as no doubt proved highly serviceable to advance the kingdom of Christ. But tares were sown: Semi-Pelagianism arose, and maintained itself among many, and continues to this day the admired system of all those, who seek to unite the arts of secular greatness with some regard for Christian orthodoxy. Its language is, that though men cannot persevere in virtue without divine grace, yet he can turn himself at first to God. Vitalis, of Carthage, seems to have been its beginner, who taught that our obedience to the gospel was no otherwise the effect of grace, than that men cannot believe, except the word be preached to them. Thus, external revelation was put in the room

¹ I have rather laid down the principles on which the civil power should act in a case of this nature, than given any opinion of the rectitude or impropriety of its conduct in the case of the Pelagians. Let the reader judge for himself: the labours of the ecclesiastics in councils and writings stand on a very different foundation.

² Aug. contra Julian, B. 2.

³ See Mosheim, Vol. 1. Quarto Edit. p. 189. It is not the business of a history to enlarge on the metaphysical difficulties with which this subject is necessarily clouded. I shall only here refer the reader to Edwards's masterly treatise on Free-will, which I think has not yet been answered. Had Mosheim better understood the grounds of the subject of human liberty, he would not so rashly have charged Augustine with inconsistency.

⁴ Cassian, B. I. de Incor. Christi.

of the secret, effectual energy of the Holy Spirit. The Pelagians, who had lost their first ground, retreated hither, and maintained, that grace was given according to that merit of men, which they shewed in attending to the word and to prayer. Some presbyters in Marseilles were at the head of this scheme, which is so specious, and carries such an air of moderation between vicious extremes, that it seems folly to oppose it, by any other arms than those of Scripture and experience. Men, who know themselves, and suffer the decisions of the divine word to prevail over their consciences, will see through the delusion, which can scarce fail to overcome all, whose religion is theory without conscience.

John Cassian, a Scythian, a monk of eminence, and a man much renowned at that time, was the pillar of this doctrine. He lived at Marseilles, and opposed the bishop of Hippo. Prosper and Hilary withstood him, and some monuments of the writings of the former will afterwards be considered. In consequence of their desires, Augustine wrote his two last books on predestination, and the gift of perseverance. Still, however, the contest between Semi-Pelagianism, and the adversaries to it, continued some time; Cassian labouring on one side, and Prosper and Hilary on the other.

Such was the rise, progress, and consequences of this most important heresy in the church of Christ. THERE MUST INDEED BE REASONS IN THE CHURCH, THAT THEY WHICH ARE APPROVED MAY BE MADE MANIFEST. The effects of them are, that the wicked in the church are more distinctly separated from the godly; the former are made worse, or at least appear so to be; the latter are purified and made white, and every way improved, both in the understanding, spirit, and power of true religion. Let frivolous controversies, which involve no nutrimental truths of godliness, be hushed and buried in oblivion, as soon as possible, because they are incapable of producing any thing but strife and vanity. But it was wrong in Moshelm to lament over the Pelagian disputes, as erroneous on both sides, when in truth the controversy was the same, which has ever been between holy men and mere men of the world; between grace and human merit;* and though in Augustine's time the question turned principally upon sanctification, in Luther's time on justification, yet the glory of God in the grace of Jesus Christ, the importance of genuine faith, and the nature and efficacy of the influences of the Holy Ghost, were equally concerned in the controversy between Au-

gustine and Pelagius, between Luther and the Papists, and I will venture to say, on scriptural grounds, between Paul the Apostle and Saul of Tarsus,—that is, between the spirit and doctrine of an humbled publican, and of a self-righteous Pharisee.

CHAPTER IV.

PELAGIAN PAPERS.

THE question, "Whether man needs the influence of the Holy Spirit to render him truly pious and holy, or he has sufficient resources in his own nature for this end," involves so much of the very essence and genius of Christianity, that compared with it a thousand other objects of debate in the church are reduced to mere insignificance. For on the right resolution of this question will depend, what ideas we ought to form of the Christian doctrines of original sin, regeneration, salvation by the grace of Jesus Christ, and sanctification by the Holy Ghost. It is to no purpose to say, that so long as all parties are convinced, that men ought to be good and virtuous, the difference of opinions on these Pelagian points is merely nominal. So men are always willing to represent the subject, who have no sense of innate depravity. But those who feel themselves "Tied and bound with the chain of their sins," will think it of essential importance to inquire, how they may be freed from this state; nor can they be contented with the external decencies of morality, while they find themselves void of the love of God and internal holiness. The Scripture decides this controversy clearly and amply; but it is my business to state as faithfully as I can the sentiments of the ancient church upon it. Till Pelagius arose, the necessity of internal efficacious grace was not disputed. He denied the existence of such a principle altogether; though, as we have seen, with much artificial equivocation. I must do justice to both parties; and review briefly, yet clearly, the sentiments of those who distinguished themselves in the controversy. One conclusion to be drawn from the whole is this, that as there is no new thing under the Sun, so the Lord raises up, from age to age, men to defend his real truths in the world.

I shall begin with taking some notice of a treatise found in the works of Ambrose, which I omitted in the review of his writings, because, both the difference of style and the reference in it to the Pelagian controversy which was after his time, demonstrate it not to be his. Much has been said[†] to deter-

* See Moshelm, *Eccles. Hist.* page 57, compared with page 278, Quarto Edit. Vol. I. That he, who in one place maintains the importance of justification by faith, should in another decide the controversy occasioned by it, seems a strong inconsistency.

† See Du Pin's elaborate criticism in his hist. of Cent. v.

mine who was the author of it. Its title is, *OF THE VOCATION OF ALL THE GENTILES*. Whoever wrote it,^a he was evidently a person well versed in Scripture, master of a good style, and well skilled in argumentation. As he has exhibited that moderate view of the doctrine of Grace, which I think most agreeable to Scripture, and remarkably coincident with the doctrines of the church of England, it will be proper to mention his leading thoughts, as a suitable introduction to the rest.

He begins, like a man of deep reflection, conscious of the difficulties which his subject involves. "A great and arduous question, says he, is agitated between the defenders of Free-will and the preachers of the grace of God. It is inquired, whether God would have all men to be saved; and as this is undeniable, it is further inquired, why the will of the Almighty is not fulfilled.—Thus, no limit is found of contrary disputations, while men do not distinguish what is manifest, from what is secret." He describes the effects of the fall, as destructive of faith, hope, understanding, and will, for the purposes of holiness and salvation; and he affirms, that no man has any resources for deliverance; because, though by natural understanding he may endeavour to oppose his vices, and may, in an outward way, adorn this temporal life, yet he cannot proceed to true virtue and eternal bliss. "For without the worship of God, what seems to be virtue, is sin, and cannot please God."—"Let no man trust in human strength which even when entire stood not, but let him seek victory by him, who alone is invincible, and conquered for all. And if he seeks, let him not doubt but that the desire of seeking has been received from him whom he seeks.—He goes on to quote the well known passages from the prophets, concerning the effectual grace of God. "For he writes his laws on their hearts, that they may receive the knowledge of God, not by man's teaching, but by the instruction of the great Teacher, because neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.—To this day is fulfilled what the Lord promised to Abraham without condition, and gave without law.—And those who obey not the Gospel, are the more inexcusable; but it is certain that they are not according to the foreknowledge of God the Sons of Abraham. He promised that these should obey, when he said, I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever. He promised that they should persevere, when he said, I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

He takes particular notice of the direc-

tion, in the first epistle to Timothy, of praying for all men without exception; and observes, that it was regarded in all Christian assemblies; and that the church prayed not only for the regenerate, but for all, even the worst of characters. "And, what she prayed for them was doubtless, that they might be converted. And, as conversion was what it was not in their power to do for themselves, the merciful and just Lord would have us to pray for all, that where we see innumerable persons recovered from such an abyss of evil, we may not doubt that God has performed these great things; and praising him for what he has done, may hope he will still do the same for those who are yet in darkness. As for those, for whom the prayers of the church are not heard, we ought to refer it to the secrets of divine justice.—We know but in part. O the depth!"—

Thus does this judicious Divine resolve into human ignorance, the great difficulty, which has agitated men of thought in all ages; whoever is disposed to do the same will have no objection to admit the doctrine of election in this sense; nor is any other submission of the understanding required, than that reasonable one which bishop Butler so admirably enforces in his Analogy. "The redemption of Christ, he observes, would be looked on in a mean light, if justification, which is by grace, were made to depend on previous merits.—If then grace finds some of the vilest characters, whom it adopts in the very departure out of life, when yet many, who seem less guilty, are void of this gift, who can say this is without the dispensation of God?" And he goes on to prove salvation to be of mere grace altogether, by a happy arrangement of Scripture passages.

"If it be asked, why the Saviour of all men has not given this sensation to all, to know the true God and his Son Jesus Christ,—what God hath secreted from us, should not be investigated; what he hath manifested, should not be denied. No genius whatever can discover the reasons of the divine dispensation in these things. Doubtless, however, the whole good of man, from the beginning of faith to the consummation of perseverance, is a divine work and gift." Yet he demonstrates, that men's departure from God is the consequence of their own will, and not properly the act of a divine constitution. And he proves from Scripture likewise, that Christ died for all men, and that he is so to be preached to all the world.^b He maintains, on the whole, three propositions; 1st, That it is the property of the divine goodness, to desire that all may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 2d, That every one, who is saved, is directed by the grace of God, and by the same

^a It seems, however, to have been the production of this century.
See Article xlii. of the Church of England.

grace kept unto the end. The sd modestly protests, that not all the plan of the divine will can be comprehended, and that many causes of divine works are above human understanding. "If insidious malignity will stop, if insolent presumption will detour, these things being firmly established, we need not distract ourselves with endless questions."

But enough has been said to give the reader an idea of this author, whose thoughts and views of Scripture are greatly superior to those of the fourth and fifth centuries in general. Whoever he was, he seems to have taken up his pen toward the close of the Pelagian controversy in a modest and temperate spirit.

So exactly are his sentiments coincident with those of the best and wisest in all ages of Christianity, that we may see the great benefit resulting to the church, in the event, from the Pelagian controversy; and while we look at the rest, his ideas will stand as a model, solid and scriptural.

St. Peter tells us of those who FAIVELA being in damnable heresies." In Pelagius this insidiousness we have seen to be very remarkable: but it seems a common character of heresy. A free and open and consistent support of what is believed to be true, is as common a mark of genuine orthodoxy. I shall attempt, however, to lay before the reader, so far as the deceitfulness of the man and the scantiness of materials will afford, a view of Pelagianism from his own mouth. Some of the documents have been glanced at in the course of the history already. Besides these he wrote, in imitation of Cyprian, a treatise of testimonies. Jerom gives some account of the work, and from him it appears, that it contained the same things which were objected to him in the Palestine synod. He wrote also some short notes on St. Paul's Epistles, doubtless with a view to accommodate them to his own system. I have repeatedly to regret, that the works of the fathers have come down to us so highly injured by fraud. Here is a remarkable instance: some short notes on St. Paul's Epistles are ascribed to Jerom's undoubted commentaries, which were certainly not written by Jerom, an open Anti-Pelagian, but must have been written by Pelagius himself, or some genuine disciple of his. They agree with the account, which Augustine gives of Pelagius's work of this sort; and certainly St. Paul's expression, in the ninth to the Rom. "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," is interpreted in the Pseudo-Jerom, exactly as Augustine tells us, Pelagius interpreted it.* On the passage, "without the

law sin was dead," the commentator asserts, they are men who assert that sin is derived to us from Adam. Nor will he allow, that Adam and Christ introduced, the one sin, the other righteousness into the world, in any other sense than by example. He all along supports that forced interpretation. On the passage, "by the offence of one many be dead," he observes, because not only sinners, but righteous men also die by a common and natural death. What St. Paul speaks of concupiscence, he will allow to be understood only of depraved habit; and in the seventh of Romans maintains, that St. Paul speaks in an assumed character. The works of the law which cannot justify, he maintains to be circumcision and the other rites of the Mosaic law, and not moral works. And the grace derived from Christ he contends to be his example. Something he allows of grace in the forgiveness of sins, nothing in the effectual work of sanctification. Charity, he observes, is from ourselves: and he maintains also, that real saints are perfect and spotless. Predestination also he excludes, except what is founded on the foreknowledge of men's faith and obedience.

Thus it appears, that heresies are revived, from age to age, with new names, and under new dresses, carrying the appearance of something original, and not allowed to be the same things which had been long ago exploded and refuted. For how often have we heard all this, which appears to be real Pelagianism, maintained in our own times?"

The last treatise, which we have reviewed, was probably that of Pelagius altogether, or certainly it belonged to some of his disciples, and is itself a sufficient proof, that his tenets were not misrepresented by his antagonists.² Further proofs, however, of what Pelagianism is, drawn from the writings of its own defender, remain to be considered.

There is, in the fourth volume of Jerom's works, which indeed consists of tracts by various authors, an explanation of a creed, inscribed to Damasus, which, by its agreement with diverse citations from it by Augustine, in the most exact manner, appears to belong to Pelagius, and it is worthy of his subtlety. He mentions the common articles of faith, and anathematizes various heresies, which all the church condemns; and, among the rest, "the blasphemy of those, who say, that any thing impossible is commanded to man by God. We so confess free-will, that we say

that wills or runs, but on God that showeth mercy. Thus is St. Paul made to defend a doctrine quite opposite to the whole current of his argument; and that, which he really anathematized, is put into the mouth of an adversary. However strained and unnatural the interpretation be, it has been equalled by modern Pelagians, who are commonly called Socinians.

¹ Jans. B. 1.

² Since I wrote the above, I have seen the Benedictine edition of Augustine's works, and find these Pelagian notes in the last volume, which the editors, without hesitation, ascribe to Pelagius.

¹ 2 Peter. B. c. 1.

² E. de Gest. Pelag. c. xvi. See Janseusius. B. 1. Pelagius said, that it was to be understood, as spoken by an adversary, that the Apostle was personating one who was finding fault, and asking how St. Paul's doctrine of free-will could stand, since it does not depend on him

we always need the assistance of God, and those are equally in error, who say, that man cannot sin, with those who say, he cannot avoid sin. For both take away the liberty of the will. But we say, that man always can sin and not sin, that we may confess we are always free in our wills. This is the faith, blessed father, (Damasus, of Rome,) which we have learned in the catholic church, which we have always held and do hold. In which, if there is any position less skilful and less cautious, we desire to be corrected by you." The fault of the creed is certainly not want of caution, but the excess of it. Under the specious term of freedom of will, in which natural⁷ and moral inability are confounded, as if they were the same thing, he undermined the essential doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit, though in a very covert manner; and asserted with an audacity almost unparalleled, that he had learned his creed in the catholic church, which had at all times hitherto expressly owned the doctrines of grace and the fall of man, while he himself appears not to have believed either the one or the other, and was labouring with all his might to eradicate both from the Christian world.

But let the reader judge for himself what the real sentiments of this ambiguous politician were, from a work undoubtedly his, by his own confession.* I mean the letter to Demetrias, and which is falsely ascribed to Jerom. As it is much too long to quote, I shall select such parts as tend most decisively to shew the real religious opinions of this heresiarch, which have been much misrepresented in our times.

"TO DEMETRIAS, a Virgin.

"If, in dependance on the greatest genius and equal knowledge, I should think myself capable of writing, yet I could not enter on so arduous a task without great fear. However, I must write to Demetrias, a virgin of Christ, noble and rich, and what is greater than these, one who tramples on nobility and riches by the ardour of faith—who sprung from the noblest family, and, brought up in the greatest wealth and delicacies, hath suddenly broke from the most tenacious blandishments of life, who hath cut down the flower of youth by the sword of faith, that is, by her will. But it is difficult to treat with such a character, in which there is so great a desire of learning, and so great ardour for perfection, that any doctrine, however perfect, can scarce equal her merit. We write at the intreaty of her holy mother. As often as I have to speak of the plan of an holy life, I use first to shew the powers of human nature, and what it really can do,

and thence to encourage the mind of the hearer to press after virtue, lest it should be of no service to call men to that which they have presumed to be impossible. For hope is the spring and source of all activity in the road of virtue. If persons despair, their efforts flag entirely. The resources of nature are therefore to be declared, that men may press toward the mark of perfection, lest, while men are unconscious of their inherent powers, they think they have not what they really have. Let this be the foundation of a spiritual life, that the virgin may know her own strength, which she may then exercise well, when she has learned that she has it. First then, measure the goodness of human nature from its author, who, when he made all things very good, must have made man perfectly so. Let man learn to know the dignity of his nature, when he sees strong animals placed in subjection to him. God would have him to be a volunteer, not a slave; and therefore he left him in the hand of his own counsel. Take care you stumble not on the rock of the ignorant vulgar; and do not think that man was created evil, because he can do evil. In the freedom of the will all the honour and dignity of nature consist; and from the same principle originates the praise of every good man. There would be no virtue in man, if he could not pass to evil. Man could not practise goodness spontaneously, were it not equally in his power to do evil. But most persons impiously, no less than ignorantly, find fault as it were with the divine workmanship. The goodness of nature is so apparent, that it shews itself even among Gentiles. How many virtuous philosophers have we read and heard of! whence their goodness, were not nature good? How much more virtuous may Christians be, who have Christ's instructions, and the assistance of divine grace."

He goes on to speak of the virtues of Abel, Enoch, Melchizedeck, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job, and describes them as all derived from the natural powers of man, "that you may understand, how great is the goodness of nature." He proceeds to deny the apostasy and depravity of nature in the fullest manner, asserting, "that the only cause which makes it difficult to do well, is the force of bad habit." "Now, if before the law, and long before the coming of our Saviour Christ, men led holy lives, how much more after his coming are they able to do it." He speaks of the grace of Christ, expiation by his blood, and encouragement derived from his example; but he only just mentions these things, without in-

* Augustine teaches us what Pelagius means by grace, as we shall see elsewhere. Certain it is, that he never allows it to mean the operation of sanctifying influence. The whole current of the letter before us, denying the evil nature of man as a lapsed creature, and asserting the sufficiency of man in his own powers, is opposed to such meaning.

⁷ Jans. B. I. vii.
⁸ Jerom's 4th, tom. v

sisting on them. "Why do we loiter and blame the infirmity of nature? He would not command us what is impossible." He lays down some rules of morality, which are indeed the best part of the letter, but lose their efficacy, because he has laid the foundation of them all in pride and self-sufficiency.

Augustine and his friend Alypius being both together at Hippo, received a letter from Juliana, the mother of Demetrias, who acknowledges the receipt of their letter, warning them against heresies. She thanks them for the admonition, but appears to insinuate that it was unnecessary to their family, which had never been infected with any heresy. She seems to mean the errors relating to the Trinity, and to have had no clear idea of the Pelagian heresy, then new in the world. These two charitable pastors having heard of the letter which had been sent to Demetrias, thought it right to detect the poison contained in it more fully, by a reply:^b

"Your words oblige us not to be silent concerning those who labour to corrupt what is sound—nor is it a small error, for men to think they have in themselves whatever is obtained of righteousness and piety; and that God helps us no further than by the light of revelation; and that nature and doctrine are the only grace of God. To have a good will, and to have love, the queen of virtues, they say our own arbitration suffices. But what says the Apostle? THE LOVE OF GOD IS SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY GHOST, WHICH IS GIVEN TO US, that no man may think he has it from himself. I find in the same letter of Pelagius to Demetrias these words, 'You have therefore something by which you may be preferred to others, nay, hence the more; for nobility and opulence are rather of your family than of you. Spiritual riches none can confer on you, but yourself. In these you are justly to be praised, in these deservedly to be preferred to others, which cannot be but from yourself and in yourself.' True it is, they must be in you; but to say they are from you, is poison. Far be the virgin of Christ from hearing these things, who piously knows the poverty of the human heart, and therefore knows not how to be adorned but with the gifts of her spouse. Let her rather hear the Apostle: I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ; but I

fear, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, &c.* In every thing give thanks. Ye do so, because ye have it not of yourselves. For who hath distinguished you from Adam, the mass of death and perdition? Was it not he who came to seek and save the lost? When the Apostle says, who made thee to differ? does he answer, my good will, my faith, my righteousness? does he not say, what hast thou that thou hast not received? We hope, considering the humility in which Demetrias was educated, that when she read the words which I quoted from the letter, if she have read them, she sighed, smote her breast, and perhaps wept, and prayed, that as these were not her words, so neither might they be her creed, that she might glory, not in herself, but in the Lord. We well know how sound you are in the doctrine of the Trinity, but there are evils of another kind than those which affect that article of the Christian faith, evils which injure the glory of the whole Trinity. If you narrowly observe, though the writer speaks of grace, he does it with guarded ambiguity; it may mean nature, or doctrine, or forgiveness of sins, or the example of Christ. But find, if you can, one word that owns a positive influence of the Holy Spirit on the mind actually imparting the power of loving God: gladly would we see such a confession in some much-admired writers; but as yet we could never discover it."

From these two Epistles the state of the Pelagian controversy appears. The heretic, though little inclined to regard grace in any sense, did not deny that forgiveness of sins might be granted; but as he denied the corruption of nature, he could never think sin to be so sinful as the word of God describes it. He dwelt on the grace of Scripture-revelation, and the example of Christ; but he loved to expatiate most freely on the powers of nature itself. But grace, as it means the gift of the Holy Spirit, renewing and sanctifying the will, he denied altogether. Augustine defended this as an essential of godliness, and therefore it appears always prominent on the face of the Pelagian controversy. It was a point of the utmost consequence; for it draws along with it all the other essential doctrines.

In the works of Ambrose^c we have another letter, under the name of Ambrose, addressed to the same virgin Demetrias: it seems written in the latter times of the controversy, and could not therefore be that of Ambrose. Probably it was written by the anonymous author of the treatise on the calling of the Gentiles. Certainly it resembles his manner both in style and sentiment; and a few quotations from it will deserve to be inserted here. He appears to have seen,

^b 14. 12.

^c They are the very same in the foregoing letter; but I omitted to quote the part.

^d Pelagius followed the maxims of philosophers, not of the Scriptures. Horace says, æquum mihi animum ipse paro. But I might quote passages without end from the classic authors to the same purpose, whom numbers called Christian since the time of Pelagius have followed. What is this but to call Paganism Christianity?

• 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3.

^e Ep. lxxxiv. p. 145.

in perfect harmony with Augustine, that the real stress of the controversy lay, not in a speculative set of doctrines, but in the solid provision made for humility. The doctrine of efficacious grace provides for this, Pelagianism excludes it. And on this single point the whole merit of the controversy may safely be made to depend. "There must, he observes, be an uniting grace, which confederates and harmonises the manifold unity of the saints and their beautiful variety. This grace is true humility. In various duties there are various degrees of virtue: but in genuine humility every thing is solid and indivisible, and therefore it makes all its subjects to be one, because it admits of no inequality. The peculiarity then of this grace lies in the confession of the grace of God, which is wholly rejected, unless it be wholly received.—That man ejects himself out of grace, who distrusts its fulness, as if man needed the help of God in one part, and did not need it in another part of his actions; as if any moment could be assigned, in which it would not be ruinous to him to be deprived of the Holy Spirit. He, indeed, in the essence of the Deity, is every where, and all-comprehensive; but is conceived in a certain manner to recede from those, whom he ceases to govern. And the cessation of his aid is to be conceived as his absence, which that man madly thinks to be useful to himself, who rejoices in his good actions, and thinks that he rather than God hath wrought them. The grace of God must therefore be owned in the fullest and most unqualified sense; the first office of which is, that his help be felt." We have not received, says the Apostle, the spirit of the world, but the spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Whence, if any man think that he has any good things of which God is not the author, but himself, he has not the spirit of God, but of the world, and swells with that secular wisdom, of which it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.—Amidst all the evils of men, to glory in our own intellects, instead of divine illumination, in knowing God, and to be elated in ourselves at the expense of the divine glory, is most dangerous. To desire to be preferred before all is mischievous; much more so to take a man's hope from the Lord, and fix it on himself. Is not this to fulfill that scripture? 'Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.'¹ It is the very sin of the devil, which ejected him from heaven. And he drew our first parents into the same, causing them to rest in the liberty of their own will.—Men more easily guard against this pride in evil things;

in virtues it is most studiously to be repelled, because he to whom praise seems due, is speciously ensnared by the temptation.—Satan, in this respect, has his eye peculiarly on the active, the sober, the chaste, and the virtuous; he would ruin them by the pride of self-sufficiency. Innumerable souls, and the churches in general, have withstood the infection of the new doctrine, but some souls have imbibed the poison. Hence this insidious commendation of human nature, and the defence of its original rectitude as ever preserved unblemished. Hence Adam's sin has been asserted as noxious only by example; hence in fact the abolition of infant-baptism; hence the unsound confession of grace, as bestowed according to merit; hence the perfidy of owning among us the wounds of original sin, and of declaring among their own partizans that Adam hurt us only by example. But while the Lord Jesus says, the whole need not a physician but the sick, they, though silent, cry aloud in praise, we are whole, we need not a physician.—Consider what is done in regeneration, not looking only at the external sign, but also at the inward grace. Are not vessels of wrath changed into vessels of mercy? and men born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God? Says not Christ, without me ye can do nothing? Does any man say, that he abides in Christ, who doubts of Christ's working in him? After quoting a number of very pertinent Scriptures, he goes on, "Every godly motion of the illuminated mind is not to be separated from the human will, because man does nothing right, except what he does willingly; but a right intention of mind is the effect of the inspiration of the divine will. Other sin mar only the virtues to which they stand opposed; this of self-righteousness, while it assumes all, mars every thing. The image of God is genuine, when it is adorned with no other ornaments than what are received from the Heavenly Husband.—Humility and charity are kindred virtues, inseparably connected, inasmuch, that what St Paul asserts of the latter,² may safely be predicated of the former."

The whole epistle is excellent, and a treasure of evangelical doctrine. But let us proceed to other monuments of antiquity.

The letter of the African council,³ in which Aurelius of Carthage presided, and which was addressed to Innocent of Rome, contains the following sentiments: "They (the Pelagians) attempt, by their praises of free-will, to leave no room for the grace of God, by which we are Christians, the Lord saying, if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. They assert, that the grace of God consists in this, that he hath so cre-

¹ 1 Cor. ii.² Jerem. xvii.³ 1 Cor. xiii.⁴ Ep. 58.

ated the nature of man, that by his own will he can fulfil the law of God. The law itself too they reckon to belong to grace, because God hath given it for an help to men.—But the real grace of God, by which a man is caused to delight in the law after the inward man, they will not acknowledge, though they dare not openly oppose. Yet, what else do they in effect, while they teach, that human nature is alone sufficient to enable men to obey the law? not attending to the Scripture, "it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. And, we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." We beseech you to observe the necessary consequence of such opinions, namely, that we have no occasion, on their plan, to pray, that we enter not into temptation: nor had our Lord occasion to say to Peter, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. He might have contented himself with exhorting or commanding him to keep his faith. And, instead of saying to his disciples, watch and pray, it would have sufficed to say, watch. When St. Paul prays, that the Ephesians might be strengthened with might in the inner man by his spirit, they, in consistency with their plan, might have said, they might be strengthened with might, by the ability of nature received in our creation. It follows too, that infants need not to be baptized at all, as being perfectly innocent, and needing no redemption."

Innocent¹ agreed with the ideas of the council in his reply. We have next in order the letter of the Milevitanian council to the same Innocent,² in which Pelagianism is opposed in a similar manner, and a good use is made of the contrast between the first and second Adam, in the fifth chapter to the Romans. And from these and many other testimonies it is evident, that the great instrument by which Pelagius deceived men was, that he used the word grace in a sense which certainly is not scriptural. With him, whatever is the gift of God, is called grace; so that a man, who, by the use of his natural powers, in conjunction with the aid of the revealed will of God, should expect to please God, might be said to seek to be saved by grace; though it is certain, that the term in the New Testament is restrained to spiritual blessings.

Augustine, in conjunction with a few other bishops, wrote again to Innocent.³ "Without doubt, says he, the grace by which we are saved, is not that with which we are created. For if those bishops who acquitted him, had understood, that he called that grace, which we have in common with the wicked, and that he denied that which we have as Christians and sons of God, he would have appeared intolerable. I blame not then

his judges, who understood the word grace in its common acceptation. Pelagius alone is not now our object, who perhaps is corrected; (I wish it may be the case;) but many souls are in danger of being beguiled. Let him be sent for to Rome, and asked what he means precisely by the term grace; or let him explain himself by letter, and if he be found to speak in the same manner as the church of Christ, let us rejoice in him. For whether he calls grace free-will, or remission of sins, or the precept of the law, he explains not that grace of the Holy Spirit, which conquers lusts and temptations, and which he who ascended into heaven, has poured on us abundantly. He who prays, "lead us not into temptation," does not pray, that he may be a man, that he may have free-will, nor for the remission of sins, the subject of the former petition, nor that he may receive a command. Prayer itself then is a testimony of GRACE; and we shall rejoice that he is right, or corrected. Law and grace are to be distinguished: the law commands, grace bestows. If you will look into the book of Pelagius, given us by Timasius and Jacob,⁴ and take the trouble to examine the places, where we have marked it, you will find, that to the objection made to him, that he denied the grace of God, he says that this grace was the nature in which God created us. If he disown the book, or those passages, we contend not, let him anathematize them, and confess in plain words, the grace which Christian doctrine teaches, which is not nature, but nature saved; not by external doctrine, but by the supply of the spirit and secret mercy. For though natural gifts may be called grace, yet that grace, by which we are predestinated, called, justified, glorified, is quite a different thing. It is of this the Apostle speaks, when he says, if by grace, then it is no more of works. And, to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. For if Christ had not died for our sins, Pelagius's possibility of nature, which he makes to be grace, would have been just the same."

But I must quote no more of this excellent epistle, in which the very hinge on which the controversy turned is explained, and which affords an easy key to solve all the perplexities and ambiguities, with which the opposers of grace, ancient or modern, so much darken the subject.

Innocent agrees with Augustine, but writes not like a master of the subject. Indeed his importance in the controversy was rather founded on his local situation, than on any great character either of learning or piety.

In his letters to Sixtus, the Roman presbyter, Augustine answers Pelagian objec-

¹ 91.

= 92.

= 95.

² He means the Synod at Lydda.

them." "They think that God is by this means made a respecter of persons. They do not consider, that due punishment is inflicted on the condemned, not due grace bestowed on the acquitted. But it is unjust, they say, that one be acquitted, the other punished in the same cause. Truly, it is just that both be punished. Who can deny it?" He goes on to quote Rom. ix.—"But why the Lord frees this man rather than that, let him examine, who can fathom the depth of divine judgment; but let him BEWARE OF THE PRECIPICE. In the mean time to him, who lives as yet by faith, and sees but in part, it is enough to know or believe, that God frees none but by gratuitous mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he condemns none but with the strictest truth by the same our Lord Jesus Christ."

Vitalis, of Carthage, though not a Pelagian by profession, taught that men were indebted to their own free-will for their conversion to God, and not to the operations of divine grace. Augustine¹ undertakes to convince him of his error by pressing upon his conscience the duty confessed by Christians to be binding on all men who professed Christianity, namely, to pray for their fellow-creatures; for infidels, that they might believe; for catechumens, that God would inspire them with a desire for regeneration; and for the faithful, that they may persevere. He shews, that the necessary consequence of Vitalis's sentiments was, that the pastors should content themselves with preaching the doctrine to men without praying for them, as he confined his idea of divine grace to the exhibition of the doctrine to mankind. He presses this argument on the conscience of Vitalis, by giving repeated scriptural proof of the duty of praying for all sorts of men, which would be rendered altogether nugatory by the Pelagian sentiments.

The letter to Anastasius breathes an evangelical spirit of charity, distinguishes that Christian grace from the spirit of slavish fear, and in no mean degree leads the humbled soul from the law to the gospel, opposing, toward the close, the Pelagian pride, which, teaching man to trust in himself, mars the whole design of Christianity.² The whole is so excellent, that I am tempted to transcribe; but brevity must be studied, and it will be no contemptible fruit of my labour, if young theological students be incited to read such a Divine as Augustine for themselves.

In a small epistolary treatise concerning the baptism of infants,³ he argues from the confessed antiquity and propriety of their baptism, admitted by Pelagians themselves, to the proof of the doctrine of original sin, and, toward the close, he thus rebukes the

pretensions to perfection made by those heretics: "As to their affirming, that some men have lived or do live without sin, it were to be wished it were so; it is to be endeavoured, that it may be so; it is to be prayed, that it may be so; not yet is it to be trusted, that it is so. For to those, who wish and strive and pray with just supplication, whatever remains of sin is daily remitted through this their cordial prayer, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Whoever asserts that this prayer is in this life unnecessary to any the most holy persons, (I except the most HOLY ONE alone,) he greatly mistakes, and pays a compliment, I am persuaded, very unacceptable to him whom he commends. If he think himself to be such an one, "he deceives himself, and the truth is not in him," for no other reason but that he thinks falsely. The physician who is not needful for the whole, but for the sick, knows in his method of cure how to perfect us for eternal salvation, who does not even take away death, the wages of sin, from those whose sins he yet forgives, that even in their struggles to overcome the fear of it, they might undertake a contest for the sincerity of faith, and in some things he does not assist even his righteous ones to perfect righteousness, lest they should be lifted up; that so while no man living is justified in his sight, we might be indebted constantly to him for forgiveness, and thank him for the same; and thus by holy humility be healed and recovered from that first cause of all vices, THE SWELLING OF PRIDE."

I may not dwell much on the larger treatises. The three books to Marcellinus against the Pelagians are the works of a master. In them he solidly confutes the idea of sinless perfection, and in answering their arguments, shews the nature of the controversy at that time. He defends the doctrine of original sin, and the custom of baptizing infants, and evinces the novelty of the Pelagian notion of man's original innocence since the fall.⁴

In his book of nature and grace he argues in much the same manner, and opposes a Pelagian writer, who extolled nature, and who found fault with those who charged their sin on the weakness of the human powers. In this treatise he observes, that Pelagianism appears to him to make a man forget, why he is a Christian.⁵ His two books,⁶ written expressly against Pelagius, contain a shrewd answer to a shrewd adversary. Augustine's inaccurate notion of the term justification, confounding it with sanctification, appears very plainly in this treatise,⁷ of which more hereafter. In the same

¹ 104, 105.² 107.³ Ep. 144.⁴ Ep. 16. of the Appendix to the Epist. Paris Edit.⁵ Aug. opera. tom. vi.⁶ Tom. vi.⁷ Id.⁸ p. 166.

treatise appears also Pelagius's 'false notion of grace, as consisting in external revelation only. The heretic's idea of "power" from God, and of "will and being" from man, mentioned in the beginning of this treatise, is remarkably descriptive of his sentiments. Augustine's tract of predestination and grace is agreeable to his other works.' In the same volume are the epistles of Prosper and Hilary concerning Semi-Pelagianism in Gaul. Their coincidence in sentiment with Augustine is apparent, and the rise of this semi-heresy and its views are by them illustrated.

His observations on the good of perseverance shew us his notion of this grace, which seems, however, different from the account in the sixth and tenth chapters of St. John.

Satan ever inclines men to extremes; and there were not wanting those, who, owning the doctrine of grace so strenuously preached by Augustine, began to think it wrong or absurd to rebuke men for sin. "If I act wrong, I am not to be blamed, but God is to be prayed to, to give me what he has not given me. It would be right to blame me, if, through my own fault, I were debared of the power of doing good."

To answer these objections, and to shew the consistency of the doctrines of grace with the use of means, exhortations, and endeavours, Augustine wrote his little tract of "rebuke and grace."^a He cannot be said to have done full justice to the subject: it required an accurate course of argumentation.^b But the little which he says is sufficient for serious and humble minds. The proud and the careless alone are overcome by such perversions as these which occasioned the tract. "O man, in the precept, know what thou oughtest to possess; in rebuke know thou art without it through thy own fault; in prayer know whence thou mayest receive what thou desirest."

"Thou art to be rebuked, because thou art not willing to be rebuked. Thou wouldst not have thy vices to be shewn thee; thou wouldst not have them smitten, nor have the wholesome pain, that thou mightest seek the physician."

"This is the utility of rebuke, which is used salubriously, sometimes in a greater, sometimes in a less degree, according to the diversity of sins; and is then wholesome, when the supreme Physician pleases." He shews that original sin in itself deserves rebuke, that from the pain of rebuke the regenerated will may arise, if the person rebuked be a son of promise, "that while the rod of correction sounds outwardly, God

within may work to will and to do by secret inspiration."

He shews the difference between the state of Adam, when perfect, and that of the best Christians while on earth. "They, though far less comfortable than he, because of the manifold conflict of the new and the old man, are nevertheless supplied with much stronger grace, even that of God made man, to emancipate them from their evils."

Jerom's writings against Pelagianism should now be considered. But of them it will suffice to say, that he is no less than Augustine determined in his opposition to the heresy. His doctrine of grace is sound; and an humility of spirit highly adapted indeed to the subject, but very contrary to the natural temper of that choleric writer, appears. One short sentence deserves to be immortalized: *Hæc hominibus sola perfectio, si imperfectos se esse noverint.*^b "This is the only perfection of men, to know themselves imperfect."

CHAPTER V.

A SHORT VIEW OF AUGUSTINE'S CITY OF GOD.

THE subject of this great work is so much of a piece with the history before us, the work itself is so remarkable a monument of genius, learning, and piety united, and deserves so well both of the classical scholar, and the Theologian, that the reader will either expect some account of it, or at least excuse me, if I attempt it. Ecclesiastical antiquity has been too much depreciated in our times, and students in divinity have been discouraged from the study of the fathers. In truth, a selection of them ought to be made; to praise or dispraise the primitive writers in general is obviously absurd. But Augustine's city of God deserves an unqualified commendation. The young student who shall meditate on it with deep attention, will find it richly to repay his labour, and the following review of its plan and contents may teach him what he is to expect from it.

The capture of Rome by Alaric the Goth, and the subsequent plunder and miseries of the imperial city, had opened the mouths of the Pagans, and the true God was blasphemed on the account. Christianity was looked on as the cause of the declension of the empire; and however trifling such an argument may appear at this day, at that time it had so great weight, that it gave occasion to Augustine, IN HIS ZEAL

^a *Id.*

^b *Tom. vi.*

^c See the subject fully, and as appears unanswerably considered in Edward's Free-will.

^d Jerom's works, Vol. I. 91 P. Go.

FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD, to write this treatise:

The work itself consists of twenty-two books. The first states the objections made by the Pagans, and answers them in form. It was a remarkable fact, that all who fled to the church called the Basilica of the apostles, whether Christians or not, were preserved from military fury. The author takes notice of this singular circumstance, as a proof of the great authority of the name and doctrine of Christ, even among Pagans, and shews that no instance can be found in their history, where many vanquished people were spared out of respect to their religious worship. He justly observes, therefore, that the evils accompanying the late disaster ought to be ascribed to the usual events of war, the benefits to the power of the name of Christ. His thoughts on the promiscuous distribution of good and evil in this life are uncommonly excellent. "If all sin, he observes, were now punished, nothing might seem to be reserved to the last judgment. If the divinity punished no sin openly now, his providence might be denied. In like manner in prosperous things, if some petitions for temporal things were not abundantly answered, it might be said that they were not at God's disposal. If all petitions were granted, it might be thought, that we should serve God only for the sake of worldly things." And in a number of elegant allusions he goes on to shew the benefit of afflictions to the righteous, and the curse which accompanies them to the wicked.* He mentions also the propriety of punishing the godly often in this life, because they are not sufficiently weaned from the world, and because they do not rebuke the sins of the world as they ought, but conform too much to the taste of ungodly men. He answers the objections drawn from their sufferings in the late disaster. "Many Christians, say they, are led captive. It would be very miserable, he owns, if they could be led to any place, where they could not find their God." In the same book he excellently handles the subject of suicide, demonstrates its cowardice, and exposes the pusillanimity of Cato. He mentions the prayer of Paulinus bishop of Nola, who had reduced himself to poverty for the sake of Christ, when the Barbarians laid waste his city, "Lord, suffer me not to be tormented on account of gold and silver; for where all my wealth is, thou knowest." For there he had his all where the Lord hath directed us to lay up our treasure, and he strongly insists, as the fullest answer to objections, that the saint loses nothing by all his afflictions.

* *Parti motu exagitatum et exhalat horribiliter conum, et suavior fragrat unguentum, &c.* It is a just recommendation of this treatise, that its Latinity is of a superior taste to that of his other works, which were written to the populace; this was meant for the perusal of philosophers.

Having sufficiently spoken to the particular occasion, he proceeds, in the second book, to wage OFFENSIVE WAR WITH THE PAGANS, and shews that while their religion prevailed, it never promoted the real benefit of men. In this book he proves his point with respect to moral evils. Immoral practices were not discouraged or prohibited in the least by the popular idolatry, but, on the contrary, vice and flagitiousness were encouraged. He triumphs in the peculiar excellence of Christian institutes, because by them instruction was constantly diffused among the body of the people, of which the whole system of Pagan-worship was void. His observations on Stage-plays,^d and on the vicious manners of the Romans, even in the best times of their republic, as confessed by Sallust, or at least deduced by fair inference from his writings, are extremely worthy of attention, nor have I seen a more just estimate any where of Roman virtue than is to be found in this and some following books. The classical reader will do well to attend to his remarks, after he has made himself master of the historical facts. And, it is only one instance among many of the unhappy propensity of the age to infidelity, that the specious sophisms of Montesquieu concerning the virtue of the Roman republic, are so much sought after and held in such veneration, while the solid arguments of Augustine are scarce known among us. He eloquently describes what sort of felicity a carnal heart would desire, and in the description, shews the unreasonableness of its wishes. In the same book will be found some valuable remains of Cicero de Republica, a most profound and ingenious treatise, of which a few fragments are preserved by Augustine, and which are introduced by him, to shew, that, by Cicero's confession, the Roman state was completely ruined before the times of Christianity. The book concludes with a pathetic exhortation to unbelievers.

In the third book he demonstrates, that the Pagans had no more help from their religion against natural evils, than they had against moral. He recounts the numberless miseries endured by the Romans long before the coming of Christ, such as would by malice have been imputed to the Christian religion had it then existed, some of which were more calamitous than any thing which they had lately sustained from the Goths.

In the fourth book he demonstrates that the Roman felicity, such as it was, was not caused by their religion. Here he weighs the nature of that glory and extent of empire with which the carnal heart is so much captivated, and demonstrates in the most solid manner, that a large extended empire is no more an evidence of felicity, than immense

^d By Roman laws players could not be admitted into Roman citizenship.

property is in private life; and whoever has been fascinated by political writers, ancient or modern, into an admiration of this false glory, may see it excellently combated by the reasonings of Augustine. The pantheistic philosophy, of which the old sages are full, is ridiculed, and the futility of all the popular religions exposed. In the conclusion he gives a short view of the dispensations of Providence toward the Jews, and shews, while they continued obedient, the superiority of their felicity to that of the Romans.

In the fifth book he describes the virtue of the old Romans, and what reward was given to it here on earth—shadowy reward for shadowy virtue. He gives an excellent account of the vices of vain glory, and contrasts it with the humility of Christians. He demonstrates that it was the true God who dispensed his mercies and judgments toward the Romans. Nor have I seen a more striking view of the emptiness of warlike grandeur, than in the account which he gives of the condition of the victors and the vanquished, and in the demonstration that the latter were no way inferior to the former in point of real happiness, except in the crisis of battle.

In the same book he argues against Cicero, and shews the consistency of the prescience of God with the free agency of man, and, in this and some other parts of his works, the discerning reader may see some traces of that ingenious work, namely, Jonathan Edwards's Enquiry on Free-will. He takes notice of the total defeat sustained by Rhadagastus the barbarous Pagan in Italy, and reminds the Gentiles how insultingly they had declared beforehand, that he would certainly be victorious. His observations on the ill success of the pious emperor Gratian, and the prosperity of Constantine and Theodosius, deserve also our attention.

Having shewn in the five first books, that Paganism could do nothing for men in temporal things, in the five following books he proves, that it was as totally insignificant with respect to the next life.* Here we meet with some valuable fragments of the very learned Varro, who divides religion into three kinds, the fabulous, the philosophical, and the political. Here too we have a clear and historical detail of the opinions of the ancient philosophers.†

Of the remaining books, the four first describe the beginning, the four middle the progress, and the four last the issues of the two states, namely, the city of God and the World; the history of both, and the different genius and spirit of each, are throughout conceived with great energy by the author, and are illustrated with copiousness and perspicuity.

The eleventh book begins with a just and solid view of the knowledge of God by the Mediator, and the authority of the Scriptures. A number of questions, which respect the beginnings of things, rather curious than important, follow. Among these there is, in the twelfth chapter, an occasional comparison of the felicity of the just in this life with that of Adam before his fall, which deserves a better character. His metaphysics concerning the origin of evil are interspersed. But the greater part of the book may be omitted with little loss to the reader. Yet his censure of Origin in the twenty-third chapter deserves attention.

In the twelfth book the question concerning the origin of evil is still more explicitly stated; and the opinions of those who pretend to account for the origin of the world in a manner different from the Scriptures, and to give it an antiquity much superior to that, which is assigned to it in them, are refuted.

The thirteenth book describes the fall of man; but questions of little or no moment are interspersed; and the subtilty of the learning of his times meeting with his argumentative mind leads him here, as in various other parts of his writings, into trifling disquisitions. I do not reckon of this sort, however, his account of the difference between an animal and spiritual body, because it throws some good light on the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians.

The fourteenth book contains matter more interesting than the foregoing three, though it is not without unimportant speculations. A just idea of the magnitude of the first sin is given, and the justice of God is excellently vindicated. In the close of this book he contrasts the two states in a very graphical manner. "Two sets of affections have produced two states: self-love produced an earthly one to the contempt of God; the love of God produced an heavenly one to the contempt of man. That glories in man, this in the Lord. That seeks glory from men, to this God the witness of the conscience is the greatest glory. That exalts the head in its own glory, this says to its God; THOU ART MY GLORY, AND THE LIFTER UP OF MY HEAD. In that the last of power reigns; in this men serve one another in love, governors in providing, subjects in obeying. That loves its own strength, this says to its God, I will LOVE THEE, O LORD, MY STRENGTH. In that wise men live according to man, and pursue the goods of body or mind or both, or, if they know God, honour him not as God, nor are thankful. In this human wisdom is of no account, godliness is all; in which the true God is worshipped, and the reward in the society of saints and angels is expected, that God may be all in all."

* Book vi.

† Book viii.

In the fifteenth book he enters upon the second part of the history of the two states, namely, their progress. He describes very justly the two types, Sarah and Agar, and illustrates the spirit and genius of the two sects by the cases of Cain and Abel. He confutes those, who would make the lives of the Antediluvians of shorter duration than that assigned them in Scripture. His reflections on the ark and the deluge are just, though to us they can contain little that is new, and, in the last chapter, he shews that the literal and allegorical sense of Scripture ought both to be supported, without depreciating either.

The sixteenth book carries on the history of the city of God from Noah to David, and contains important instruction throughout; especially to those who have not read the same things in modern authors.

The seventeenth book may be called the prophetic history. He shews a double sense must necessarily be affixed to the words of the prophets, in which sometimes the literal, sometimes the spiritual, and sometimes both senses are applicable. He justly observes therefore, that the Scriptures are to be understood in a tripartite sense. And he gives an admirable instance of his views in Hannah's song in the first book of Samuel, in which a king is prophesied of, at a time when no king was in Israel. His comment on the Psalms are excellent also to the same purpose. These views are so remote from the usual mode of reasoning in our times, that they will not easily find credit in the world. But I will venture to affirm, that the more men study the Scriptures, the more they will see the justness of Augustine's remarks, and the necessity of admitting them.

In the eighteenth book he displays much learning in describing the times of the world coeval with those of the church of God, to the birth of Christ. He proves the superior antiquity of prophetic authority to that of any philosophers. The remarkable harmony of the sacred writers in the promotion of one system, and the endless discordancies of philosophers, are ably contrasted. Yet, he proves from the earliest times that the citizens of the new Jerusalem were not confined absolutely to Jewry.

In speaking of the times of Christ and the propagation of the Gospel he observes, "In this malignant world, in these evil days, whilst the church is procuring future dignity by present humility, and is disciplined by the incentives of fear, the torments of pain, the fatigue of labours, and the dangers of temptations, rejoicing only in hope, when her joy is found, many reprobates are mixed with the good; both are collected into the Gospel-net, and both, included in this world

as in a sea, swim promiscuously, till they reach the shore, where the bad shall be severed from the good, and in the good, as in his temple, God shall be all in all."—Christ chose disciples, meanly born, obscure and illiterate, that whatever great things they should do, he might be in them, and do all. One he had among them, whose evil he turned to good, by making it an instrument of his passion, and affording an example to his church of enduring evil. His holy Church being planted, so far as his bodily presence required, he suffered, died, rose again, shewing by his passion what we ought to sustain for truth, by his resurrection what to hope for in eternity; and this is an additional lesson to the great mystery of redemption, by which his blood was shed for the remission of our sins. He proves that the faith of the Gospel is strengthened by the dissensions of heretics; and after some observations on Antichrist, as just as might be expected in his time, he concludes with a remark on a Pagan prophecy, which affirmed that the Christian religion would only continue three hundred and sixty-five years. "What may be doing, says he, at the end of this period in other parts of the world, it may be needless to inquire. I will mention what I know; in the renowned city of Carthage, the imperial officers, in the year following the predicted extinction of Christianity, overturned the temples of the idols, and brake the images. And for the space of thirty years since that time, the falsity of the Pagan divination being notorious, occasion hath been given to render the progress of the Gospel still more triumphant."

The four last books describe the issues of the two states. The nineteenth deserves the studious attention of every scholar, who would accurately distinguish between theology and philosophy. He contrasts the ideas of happiness exhibited by both with great clearness, and, while he does justice to all the good that is found in secular systems, he points out their fundamental errors. The principles of evangelical virtue are stated; the miseries of life are described, and both the true relief against them which the Gospel proposes is exhibited, and the false consolations of philosophy are justly exposed. In fine, (for my limits admit not a longer detail) the reader will find here the mass of secular philosophy reduced to order, its errors detected, and the very picture of the Christian state and genius delineated.

The twentieth book undertakes to describe the last judgment. But as the vigorous and discursive genius of the author led him to handle a multitude of intricate questions, and to undertake the exposition of some of the most difficult prophecies in the Scrip-

ture, for which the early times in which he lived were unequal, through want of the evidence of their accomplishment, almost the whole is very uninteresting.

In the two last books he gives his ideas of the punishment of the wicked, and of the happiness of the righteous in a future state. The former, though it has a mixture of curious questions, more subtil than important, will, from the eleventh chapter to the end, deserve a careful perusal. I have not seen in so small a compass, a sounder answer to the objections of men against the divine justice in punishing sin eternally, than is to be found in the eleventh and twelfth chapters. It appears that the Lord's Prayer was daily used by the church^a in his time, and though he seems to give an unsound interpretation of our Lord's words, of making *FRIENDS OF THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS*, yet he confesses his interpretation would be dangerous in practice; and he protests against the ideas of those who imagine they can atone for their sins by alms. He refutes various presumptions of men, who expect to escape the damnation of hell, without a sound conversion.

In the last book, which describes the eternal rest of the city of God, he thinks proper to dwell a little on the external evidences of Christianity, and in speaking of miracles, he describes, in chap. eight, some which were wrought in his own time. One of them, the healing of a disorder, seems peculiarly striking, because it was in answer to prayer. I have again to regret the scholastic and subtil taste of his times interwoven with most important matter. The twenty-second chapter gives as striking a proof drawn from facts of human apostasy as I have seen. The reflections in the two next chapters are also admirable. And he closes with a delightful view of the eternal felicity of the church of God.

Should the very imperfect sketch I have given of this work, one of the greatest efforts of genius and learning in any age, induce any classical scholars to peruse it with candour and attention, and, by the blessing of God, to imbibe some portion of the heavenly spirit of the author, I shall have cause to rejoice. One caution I must however give in reading it, which, indeed, is generally necessary in reading the Fathers, and it is that which I would keep steadily in view throughout this history. We must forget our own times, spirit, taste, and manner: we must transplant ourselves into those of the author, and make allowances for his modes both of thinking and speaking, which are extremely different from our own. Without this reasonable degree of candour, to which, however, few minds are sufficiently inclined,

it is impossible to make a just estimate of the works which pass under our examination.

CHAPTER VI.

AUGUSTINE'S CONDUCT TOWARD THE DONATISTS.

THE active spirit of the bishop of Hippo found sufficient employment in his long course of private and public labours against the Pelagians, the Manichees, and the Donatists, besides the general care of the African churches, and the peculiar inspection of his own diocese. The two former sects he in a manner eradicated. His own experience in religion fitted him for the work; the last sect he opposed with much success. Vital godliness, it is true, is not so much interested in this opposition, nor does his conduct here merit in all respects that praise in regard to them, which it does in regard to the others.

Let us distinguish the Donatists, as they ought to be. Some of them were, comparatively speaking, a mild and peaceable people; others, called the *CRUCUMCELLIONES*, were a mere banditti, sons of violence and bloodshed, who neither valued their own lives, nor those of their neighbours, and frequently were remarkable for committing suicide in a fit of phrenzy. They had a peculiar malice against the pastors of the general church, and way-laid them, from time to time, attacked them with armed force, and mutilated, or even killed them. They burnt the houses of those who would not comply with their sect, and were guilty of many detestable enormities. Augustine himself was several times way-laid by these miserable men, and once by a peculiar Providence, through the mistake of his guide, was led into a different road from that by which he had intended to travel, when he was going through one of his usual visitations of his diocese, a work which he was wont to discharge with frequency and labour. He learnt afterwards, that by this means he had escaped an ambush which they had laid for him.

There was nothing peculiarly doctrinal in the whole scheme of the Donatists: they differed from the general church only concerning a matter of fact, namely, whether Cæcilian had been legally ordained. Augustine justly observes in his controversy with them, that, if their opponents had been mistaken, such a circumstance justified not at all their separation from the general church, since Jesus Christ, his grace, and doctrine, remained the same. Yet, for such a trifle, even from the close of the third century to

^a Chap. last.

this which is before us, did these schismatics think it worth while to rend the body of Christ, when the articles of belief were the same in both parties. So much had men forgotten to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace! The peaceable Donatists abhorred the madness of the Circumcelliones, and yet had not the discernment to see and lament the evils which their own needless schism had occasioned. They themselves were crumbled into parties, and subdivided into little bodies, which condemned one another, each arrogating to itself the title of the true church, while they all joined to condemn the general church. In the mean time they were extremely active in re-baptizing multitudes in Africa; for the baptism of the general church was not by them allowed to be any baptism at all.

Augustine owns, concerning one party of them, the Rogations, that they carefully distinguished themselves from the Circumcelliones. Whether the rest did so, is not so evident. This may be safely affirmed, that all truly humble and godly persons of the Donatist name, (and I hope there were many such in Africa,) must have separated themselves from them entirely. But it was very difficult for others to make the just distinction: Africa was full of these schismatics, and the furious party were undoubtedly very numerous. Let us briefly state the methods used by Augustine with respect to this people.

At first, when he saw the vast numbers of them with which Africa swarmed, his heart was struck with horror at the thought of exposing them to the penal laws of the empire; and he wrote to the imperial court his sentiments and wishes, which were, that the lawless and savage conduct of the Circumcelliones might be restrained by the civil sword, but that no other arms should be used against the peaceable Donatists, than preaching and arguments; because, as he observed, compulsive conversions were not genuine, and tended only to harden men in sin.

Other bishops of the general church in Africa were not so moderate: they desired that the civil restraints should be exercised on the whole Donatist name, and signified these sentiments to the Imperial Court, at a time when their spirits were heated by the savage treatment of a certain bishop, who had fallen into the hands of the Circumcelliones, and was believed to have lost his life. Under the impression of this belief, on account of many enormities which had been practised by the banditti, the court issued orders for fines to be imposed on Donatists, and banishment on their bishops. It was not till after these edicts were promulged, that it appeared, that the injured bishop had escaped with life. Augustine owns that he afterwards retracted his opinion, when he

saw the good effects of the interposition of the civil magistrate. Many of the Circumcelliones, he observes, with much humility and joy confessed their error, and returned into the bosom of the church: numbers too, who had never joined in their enormities, and who had nothing to plead for their schism but custom and tradition, and the shame of inconstancy, and the fear of molestation from the Circumcelliones, when they found themselves exposed to the laws for the defence of their schism, began to examine the grounds on which it stood, saw and confessed their error, and united themselves to the general church with every mark of serious repentance. Moved by these considerations, and convinced by the effects rather than the reason of the case, the bishop of Hippo repeatedly supported in his writings the justice and reasonableness of the imperial methods of opposing the Donatists.

It is certain, however, that he continued all the time extremely tender in his conscience concerning the subject. He repeatedly and earnestly pressed the magistrates on no account to shed blood, and in all his writings and conduct on this occasion demonstrated, that he was led by principle, by the fear of God, and by a charitable compassion for the souls of men, in his contentions with the Donatists. I know it is not easy for men to believe this, who are themselves profane and careless, and with whom all sorts of religion are of equal value, because they are apt to measure others by themselves. Yet, whoever shall take pains to weigh the writings of Augustine on the subject, and to compare them with his practice and general temper, will feel an invincible conviction, that I have not been betrayed into an excess of candour in forming this judgment. In truth the case was mixed and complicated; one sort of conduct ought to have been held toward the furious, another toward the peaceable. But it was difficult to distinguish in real fact, though none in our times will doubt, that Augustine's first sentiments were more just than his second. He largely insists on the unreasonableness of the Donatists in confining the mercies of salvation to themselves, as if all the world had been unchristian, and Africa alone were possessed of the truth. And he observed, that their absurdity appeared still stronger in confining salvation to some particular spots of Africa, when they had subdivided themselves into little parties, each pretending to monopolize the truth. But then the general church should not have imitated this bigotry, in condemning the whole body of the Donatists. Highly culpable as these were in breaking the unity of the church, the peaceable part of them, who feared God and wrought righteousness, should have been owned as brethren by the general church, and the furious alone should have been rejected

as unchristian, and exposed to the civil law for their crimes. It was an erroneous notion of the unity of the church and the dread of schism on the one hand, which led Augustine into the mistake; and it was an abuse of the right of conscience on the other, which seduced the Donatists.¹

The bishop of Calama, one of the disciples of Augustine, going to visit his diocese, was attacked by the Circumcelliones, robbed, and so ill treated, that he escaped with difficulty. Upon this, Crispinus the Donatist bishop of Calama, was fined by the magistrate according to the laws. He denied himself to be a Donatist, and the two bishops of Calama appeared in court, and pleaded before a great multitude, nor did Augustine refuse his assistance to the church on this occasion. The Donatist was convicted, and required to pay the fine. But the disciple of Augustine, satisfied with his victory, begged that the fine might be remitted, which request was granted accordingly. The pride of the Donatist refused to stoop, and he appealed to the Emperor, who ordered the law to be executed with the greatest rigour on the whole party. The bishops of the general church, however, with Augustine at their head, implored for them the imperial clemency, with success.

No doubt it would have been far more agreeable to the maxims of Christianity, had no methods but those of argument been employed against the Donatists. But the difficulties of the case have been stated; and the conduct of Augustine, and no doubt of other godly persons in Africa, was in general of a piece with the mild behaviour which they displayed on this occasion. Instances, however, of iniquitous and oppressive exactions against the peaceable Donatists, would naturally take place, amidst the indignation of men's minds against the Circumcelliones. Nor is there any thing in all this which impeaches the acknowledged sincerity, meekness, and piety of the bishop of Hippo, notwithstanding the mistake of judgment, which happened to him in common with the whole

church at that time. It is a delicate and difficult matter to settle, in all cases, how far the civil magistrate ought to interfere in religion. Different ages are apt to run into different extremes, as either superstition or profaneness predominates. Doubtless there is a middle path of rectitude in this subject, which I have endeavoured to describe on a former occasion, though, to apply it with exactness to all cases and circumstances would be difficult in itself, and foreign to the design of this history. Donatism, however, under the charitable and argumentative labours of Augustine, received a blow, from which it never recovered, and the sect dwindled gradually into insignificance: and the most pleasing part of the story is, that by the suppression of the Circumcelliones, the Ecclesiastical face of Africa must have been abundantly meliorated, and, in all probability, a great accession made to the real church of Christ.²

CHAPTER VII.

THE REST OF AUGUSTINE'S WORKS REVIEWED.

THE two tracts, on lying, addressed to Consentius, demonstrate the soundness of the author's views in morality. Such indeed is the connection between one part of divine truth and another, that those who have the justest and the largest views of Gospel-grace, have always the most exact and extensive ideas of moral duty, and what is more, exemplify them in life and conversation. For the same self-righteousness, which tarnishes the lustre of divine grace, always induces its votary to curtail the demands of the divine law, to adulterate it with pride and the love of the world, and to render a thousand things allowable in practice, which an humble and holy soul must abhor. We have seen what vague and dangerous notions of veracity had begun to prevail during the progress of superstition, from which even such men as Ambrose and Chrysostom were not exempt; and that what are called pious frauds had in some instances been esteemed laudable. Augustine in the treatise before us, defines lying to be "The saying of one thing and thinking of another," and in all cases, even for the

¹ It would be equally tedious and uninteresting to take notice of the endless perversions with which Mr. Gibbon has filled the history of the church. A remark or two may be made, to guard those who read his history against his deceptions. In reading him (chap. xxxiii. vol. III. Decline and Fall of the Roman empire), I was surprised to meet with two representations, for neither of which I could find any foundation in original records, both relating to these Donatists. The first is, that he ascribes the madness, and tumult, and bloodshed of the Circumcelliones to the imperial persecutions in Augustine's time. I will not say how far these outrages might be increased by them; but the Donatists had ever been an unruly and turbulent sect. Their very origin was scandalous, and in Julian's time their furious conduct deserved the interference of the civil magistrate. Aug. ad Donat. Ep. 105. Fleury, Vol. II. B. xv. C. 32. His second account is still more glaringly false. He ascribes the success of the Vandals in Africa to the effect of the same prosecution of the Donatists, who, he supposes, joined the arms of Genseric against the general church. Of this no proof appears at all. He might as justly have ascribed the Pretender's invasion of Scotland, in the last rebellion, to the revival of godliness in Great Britain, which took place about the same time.

² After examining Augustine's writings concerning the Donatists, particularly letters the 98, 50, 61, and 127, and the narrative of Possidonius, I have endeavoured to compress into this chapter the substance of the historical information, which they contain, without troubling myself or the reader with particular citations. I have done on this occasion, what I profess to do generally, to the best of my ability, namely, formed my judgment on original evidences, and not on the opinions and reasonings of any modern whatever. Laborious task! compared with the ease of copying other historians; invidious also, because it often obliges one to run counter to modern representations! but it is the task of a real historian.

most pious and salutary purposes, he excludes lying as unchristian. The second chapter of the epistle to the Galatians had been perversely interpreted in that part of it which relates to the dissimulation of Peter.¹ He rescues the divine oracles from the abuse, and demonstrates from the most express and determinate decisions of the new Testament, that all deceit of the tongue is wicked. The task was worthy of him, who was the principal instrument of the revival of godliness in the church.²

His treatise on faith and works was written to obviate the Antinomianism, which some were in his time desirous of introducing. Men, who still persevered in their sins, desired to be baptized; and there were those who supported their unreasonable wishes, and thought it sufficient to teach them, after baptism, how they ought to live, still holding out a hope to their minds, that they might be saved as by fire, because they had been baptized, though they never repented of their sins. In answer to these dangerous abuses, our author shews, that the true saving faith works by love, that the instruction of catechumens includes morals, as well as doctrines; that the labour of catechizing is exceeding profitable to the church, and that persons ought to be catechized before they receive baptism, that they may know how vain it is to think of being eternally saved without holiness. He justly observes, that the eunuch's answer to Philip, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," virtually and radically involved in it, a knowledge of the true character of the person and offices of Christ, and of the qualities which belong to his members. He supports his doctrine by Scripture-authority, particularly by that of St. James in his second chapter; and against those who say, that they would believe in Christ and come to him, and are hindered, he observes, "We do not prohibit such as are willing, from coming to Christ, but we prove by their own practice, that they are not willing to come to Christ; nor do we

forbid them to believe in Christ, but demonstrate that they are not willing to believe in Christ, who believe that adulterers can be his members." On the whole, he reprobates the most dangerous notion of the possibility of baptized persons being saved in their sins, and recommends strongly an attention to church-discipline, and to the wholesome practice of catechizing, shewing through the whole a zeal for the cause of holiness, and a fear of men's abusing the doctrines of grace.³

In a small treatise to Simplician the aged bishop of Milan, who was both the instructor and the successor of Ambrose, he undertakes to solve the difficulties usually grounded on the ninth chapter to the Romans. And he defends the doctrine of divine grace in his usual manner. His remarks on "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," will deserve to be transcribed. "It is not said, it is not of him that is unwilling and despises, but of God who hardens.—Nothing is done by God to make men worse; only that is not bestowed, which might make them better.—Since human society is connected by giving and receiving, who does not see, that no man is accused of iniquity, who exacts what is due to himself, or remits the same? This idea of equity is impressed on us by the divinity. All men die in Adam, being one mass of iniquity: this death may be called a debt due to divine justice, which, whether it be exacted, as with some, or remitted, as with others, there is no iniquity."⁴

The treatise on catechizing the ignorant deserves to be read both for the solid and pious vein of instruction which runs through it, and also for the light, which it throws on the customs of the church. It appears, that whoever desired to be admitted into the church, was obliged to attend the catechist; and the work, in our author's manner of practising it, was very important. The person, to whom he writes, had expressed a concern, because he could not please himself in his manner of speaking. Augustine observes, that this may easily happen, even when there is no particular fault in our manner of exhorting. He owns that it was generally the case with himself.—And that the reason is, the mind of a serious preacher or catechist conceiving in one glance a beauty and weight in his subject, to express which his words are too slow or inadequate, he feels ashamed and disappointed; yet, continues Augustine, he ought not to conclude that his words are lost, or that they appear as mean to the hearers, as they do to himself. "We see, says he, but in a glass darkly, and we must patiently labour to make greater improvement in divine life. Yet it is desirable to catechize with a cheerful spirit and with sensible

¹ Aug. opera, tom. iv. page 2. Paris edition, 1571.

² In this chapter, the other works of Augustine, which have not fallen under our consideration, in the preceding chapters, are considered, so far as I think them worthy of the reader's particular attention. Those parts of his voluminous writings, which are either mere repetitions of what has been elsewhere illustrated, or seem not to convey any interesting instruction, or handle subjects which have been much better treated by those who have had the advantage of later improvements, are omitted.

The book of Meditations, though more known to English readers than any other of the works ascribed to Augustine, on account of the translation of it into our language by Stanhope, seems not to be his, both on account of its style, which is sententious, concise, abrupt, and void of any of those classical elegancies, which now and then appear in our author's genuine writings, and also on account of the prayers to deceased Saints which it contains. This last circumstance peculiarly marks it to have been of a later date than the age of Augustine. Frauds of this kind were commonly practised on the works of the fathers in the monastic times. For the most part, however, this book may be read with profit by the serious reader, because of the devotional spirit in which it resembles the genuine works of Augustine.

³ Id. p. 18.

⁴ Id. p. 117.

comfort in one's own mind. This, however, is the gift of God."

In the method of catechizing, he recommends to begin with narration, to give to the pupils a clear and succinct view of the great facts, relative to our religion, both of the Old and New Testament, even to our own times, and to dwell more largely on the more important, and only glance at those which are less so. In the whole manner of doing this, the teacher should have his eye steadily fixed on the great end, *LOVE*, and refer every thing, which he relates, to the plan of divine love in the gift of Jesus Christ, describing the fall and the redemption, and the method of God in winning back the apostate spirits of men to love him in return for his free love to us in Jesus Christ. Yet he observes that without fear of divine wrath, there can be no motive for sinners to approach to the God of love, or any sufficient inducements to engage their minds to seek him. Nor should the catechist be too shy in conveying his instructions, because the catechumen's motives may be merely worldly. It often happens, says he, through the mercy of God, that he, who applied to us for instruction with carnal views, is brought to feel the value of that, of which at first he only made pretence. But it would be useful, if the catechist could know beforehand what was the frame of the catechumen. If he cannot, he must interrogate him himself, and regulate his discourse by the answers he receives. If the catechumen owns, that fear of divine wrath for sin, or the terror of some powerful awakening admonition from God, has led him to apply for information, the catechist has then the fairest opening for instruction.

When he has finished his narration, he should add exhortation, laying open the hope of resurrection, and the awful views of divine judgment, of heaven and hell. He should arm the catechumen against the scandals and temptations to which he may be exposed from the perverseness of heretics, the malice of open enemies, or the evil lives of nominal Christians. And he is particularly to be directed, amidst all the precepts given him how to please God and live an holy life, not to trust in any of his works, but in the grace of God alone.

If the person hath had a liberal education, he must not be offended by a tedious and diffusive view of things respecting the facts of Christianity, though a fuller display of the same facts will be needful for the unlearned. —The discourse must be varied; it will be necessary in some things to be more large, as in others to be more brief. For instance, in guarding him against the pride of learning, and, in forming his taste, he will need to be seriously instructed to avoid faults of a moral rather than those of a literary nature, and to dread the want of grace in his words and

deeds rather than a solecism or barbarism in language, and to take particular care not to despise illiterate Christians.

He hath already hinted at one discouragement with which the catechist is apt to be affected. Another is, that whereas he would rather himself read or hear things useful for his own improvement, he is obliged repeatedly to have recourse to things, which to himself are now no longer necessary. No doubt this is one cause in all ages, why so few love the office of instructing the ignorant. Those, who themselves are ignorant, are not fit to instruct, and those who are knowing are apt to be above the task. A pastor, he observes, is engaged in some agreeable study, and is told that he must proceed to catechize. He is vexed, that the course of his work is interrupted, and from the agitation of his mind, is less fitted to discharge the work itself.

Hence he concludes it is necessary, that the teacher should himself learn those things, which may exhilarate his own mind: for God loveth a cheerful giver. He adds, that the meek and charitable example of the Son of God should to this end be placed before him, to shame him out of his pride and impatience; that if indeed we have any more useful study to prosecute respecting ourselves, we may then expect that God will speak to us in it more powerfully, when we have undertaken cheerfully to speak for him as well as we could to others, and that the tediousness of that trite and plain road of catechizing should be smoothed by divine love in the heart, and that when we consider that we are poor judges of the best order of things, and how much better it is to leave the direction of times and seasons with the all-wise God, we shall not take it amiss, that the providential calls of duty disturbed the order which we had prescribed to ourselves, and that, in short, his will took place before ours.

In interrogating the catechumen, he is to be asked, whether he means to be a Christian for the sake of this life or the next. And one of the most important cautions to be given him is, that he desire to be a Christian solely on account of eternity.

He concludes with the form of a catechetical instruction, which is itself no mean sermon, comprehending the very essentials of the Gospel-salvation by Jesus Christ through faith," the most important doctrines connected with the most material Christian duties. But enough of this subject: let those pastors, with whom religion is mere form, read and blush, and learn and imitate.

In his treatise on patience,⁹ he is solicitous to shew that its origin is from divine grace, and that it is a virtue, in its whole nature, distinct from any thing seemingly resembling

it, which may arise from natural resources. To pave the way to an illustration of this thought, he starts an objection, natural enough to an infidel mind. "If men, to gratify their secular desires, can without divine grace, by the mere strength of nature endure patiently the greatest hardships, why may not men by the same strength endure afflictions through the love of eternal life?" In answer to this, he observes, that the stronger men's desires are after worldly things, the more firmly and resolutely will they endure hardships to obtain the gratification of their selfish desires, whether riches, praise, or whatever else. In like manner, the more sincerely they love heavenly things, the more cheerfully will they endure what they are called to suffer on their account. Now worldly desire originates from the human will, is strengthened by the delight which the mind takes in worldly objects, and is confirmed by custom. But the love of God has no such origin; it is not from ourselves, it is altogether by the Holy Ghost given to us. And he goes on to shew, that electing grace, not in consequence of any works of man, but previous to them all, while he is ungodly and without strength, chooses him to salvation, and bestows on him the whole power to will and to do, and is itself the first and decisive source of all the good which he does, which good is all along assisted, supported, and maintained to the end, and at length rewarded hereafter.

It is not in commenting on the Scriptures, that the peculiar excellencies of Augustine appear. The fanciful mode of Origen vitiated the whole plan of exposition from his days to the reformation. Yet, Augustine has far less of it, and enters more precisely into the sacred oracles than most of the fathers of his time; but he does this better in expounding a particular point of doctrine, which he has before him, than in any of his orderly comments. His exposition of the Psalms is full of pious sentiments, and he breaks out from time to time into beautiful and pathetic observations. He sees Christ every where in the Psalms, though he is not always happy in his manner of expounding the passages. On his exposition of St. John's Gospel similar observations may be made. It cannot, however, be denied, that extremely imperfect as his expositions are, they have been highly useful to the church, because the lights which they contained were not only beneficial to pious men in the dark ages, but afforded also much assistance to the reformers, when a more judicious and intelligent vein of interpretation took place.

His treatise on Christian doctrine deserves to be perused throughout by young ministers; for the purpose of forming the

taste and directing the manner, as well as enlightening the understanding, and warming the heart of him who undertakes to instruct mankind. As a preacher, Augustine doubtless excelled; but his excellence lay in exhibiting that which was useful to the vulgar, not that which was entertaining to the learned. Perhaps, in no age was the pastoral taste more depraved, than it is in the present. A highly finished, elaborate, and elegant style is looked on as the perfection of a Christian speaker; and the manner, rather than the matter, is the chief object. It is not considered, that an artificial and polished arrangement of sentences is lost on a vulgar audience, and those who affect it, are, it is to be feared, little moved themselves by the importance of divine things, and are far more solicitous for their own character as speakers, than for the spiritual profit of their hearers. Yet in no age did God Almighty ever more clearly shew, by the effects, what was agreeable in his sight. What a number of learned and elaborate sermons have been preached to no purpose! even the truth of doctrine that is in them is rendered, in a great measure, useless by the wisdom of words, with which it has been clothed. While plain artless colloquial addresses to the populace, by men fearing God, and speaking of divine things in fervour and charity, have been attended with DEMONSTRATION OF THE ART OF POWER, and souls have been rescued, through their means, from sin and Satan. Classical and ornamental knowledge is not the first thing to be aimed at by a pastor. If he is yet very young, his time indeed is laudably employed in cultivating his faculties in this respect. And if his genius for eloquence be strong and acute, he will soon learn the justest rules sufficiently for the purpose of his profession. There is indeed an eloquence in the Scripture, but it is an eloquence adapted to the subject, plainly divine; and though it does not avoid, yet it never ostentatiously displays the eloquence of the Greeks and Romans. A pastor who has talents for speaking, attended with superior learning and endowments, will study to attain "a diligent negligence," that he may never overabound the capacities of his audience, either by refined reasonings or by artificial elegancies of diction. Plain, downright, above all things perspicuous and intelligible, without being rude or clownish, he will descend to the lowest comprehension of his audience; and his grandeur and sublimity will appear in things, not in words. He will gladly give up his reputation to the fastidiousness of critics; for he has souls to bring into Christ's fold, and is not solicitous of the praise of men. He will shew, without designing it, from time to time, that he can speak more elaborately, and more elegantly; but eloquence will follow his subject,

not go before it. This will be the plan of a man of genius and learning in the work of the pulpit: he will humble himself, that Christ may be exalted. But Christ can do his work by workmen of slower and more ordinary capacities, and he often has done so.*

I have not wandered from the subject of CHRISTIAN doctrine, handled by Augustine. What I have mentioned are in a great measure his ideas. One important rule he adds, which, though plain to every serious mind, is too much overlooked by many. "Let our Christian orator, says he, who would be understood and be heard with pleasure, pray before he speak. Let him lift up his thirsty soul to God, before he pronounce any thing. For since there are many things which may be said, and many modes of saying the same thing, who knows, except he who knows the hearts of all men, what is most expedient to be said at the present hour? and who can cause us to speak what we ought, and as we ought, unless he in whose hands we and our words are? And, by these means, he may learn all that is to be taught, and may acquire a faculty of speaking as becomes a pastor. At the hour of speaking itself a faithful spirit will think his Lord's words adapted to his circumstances. Think not what or how ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." If the Holy Spirit speak in those who are delivered up to persecutors for Christ, why not also in those who deliver Christ to learners? But, on the other side, if

any say, that men need to know no rules nor follow any studies, if the Holy Ghost make men teachers, it might be said also, men need not to pray, because our Lord saith, your Father knoweth what ye have need of before ye ask him; and at this rate the rules of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus might be superseded. Prayer and study therefore should go hand in hand; and the two epistles to Timothy and that to Titus are of standing authority in the church, and ought to be deeply meditated upon by every one who undertakes the office of a teacher."

The whole treatise deserves to be studied by junior pastors; the fourth book particularly; in the latter part of which he lays down the three sorts of style so judiciously described by Cicero, exemplifies them by Scripture instances, and instructs his young Christian orator how to adapt them to the nature of the subjects which lie before him.

His treatise on the Trinity[†] is very elaborate. Perhaps all that has ever been said in any age, in vindication and explanation of that great mystery, is contained in this book. It is in perfect unison with the expositions and sentiments of all the pious men who preceded him, and particularly with the views of Novatian in his treatise on the same subject. Whether the writers were of the general church or dissenters, they are perfectly unanimous in confessing the Trinity in unity, and in proving the doctrine from Scriptures, and in leaving something after all inexplicable in the subject; but in a manner congruous to the idea of incomprehensibility attached to the divine essence. Augustine does full justice indeed to the argument, but it must be confessed, he does more; he loses both himself and his readers, by metaphysical subtilties and vain attempts to find analogies and similitudes, yet with a spirit so humble and cautious, as to separate carefully his conjectures from divine truth, and to leave the authority of Scripture unviolated. He who has leisure may peruse the whole work with profit. The humble and serious spirit of the author appears particularly in the several prefaces to its parts, and in the prayer at the close, an extract of which is as follows: "O Lord our God, we believe in thee the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. For the Truth would not have said, Go, baptize all nations, in the name, &c. if thou wert not a Trinity. Nor wouldest thou order us to be baptized in the name of him who is not God. I have sought thee, and examined and laboured much in composing this treatise. My God, my only hope, hear me, lest, through weariness, I cease to seek thee. Thou, who wilt be found, and hast given me increasing hope of finding thee, give me strength to seek thee. Before thee are my strength and

* Augustine knew how to practise his own rules of eloquence, and two instances related by himself shew him, notwithstanding the defective taste of his age, to have been no mean orator. While he acted as a presbyter at Hippo, under Valerius his bishop, he was appointed by him to preach to the people, in order to reclaim them from riotous feasting on solemn days. He opened the Scriptures, and read to them the most vehement rebukes. He besought them by the ignominy and sorrow, and by the blood of Christ, not to destroy themselves, and to pity him who spoke to them with so much affection, and to shew some regard to their venerable old bishop, who, out of tenderness to them, had charged him to instruct them in the truth. "I did not make them weep," says he, by first weeping over them, but while I was preaching, their tears prevented mine. Then I own I could not restrain myself. After we had wept together, I began to entertain great hope of their amendment." He now varied from the discourse he had prepared, because the present softness of their minds seemed to require something different. In fine, he had the satisfaction to find the evil redressed from that very day.

The other occasion was this, "we must not imagine, says he, that a man has spoken powerfully, when he receives much applause. This is sometimes given to low turns of wit, and merely ornamental eloquence. But the sublime overwhelms the mind with its vehemence, it strikes them dumb; it melts them into tears. When I endeavour to persuade the people of Caesarea to abolish their barbarous sports, in which, at a certain time of the year, they fought publicly for several days, I said what I could, but while I heard only their acclamations, I thought that I had done nothing; but when they wept, I had hope that the horrible custom which they had received from their ancestors would be abolished.—It is now upwards of eight years since that time, and by the grace of God they have ever since been restrained from the practice." Here was true eloquence, and, what is of far more consequence, true piety in a preacher.

† B. IV.

* Ep. 29. to Alypius.

† Tom. III.

my weakness. Preserve that and heal this. Before thee are my knowledge and ignorance. Where thou hast opened to me, uphold me, when I enter: where thou hast shut up, open to me, when I knock. I would remember thee, understand thee, love thee. Augment in me these things, till thou perfectly form me anew. I know it is written, in the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin: but I would to God I spake only concerning thy word, and in praising thee; I should then do what is acceptable in thy sight, though I spake much. For thy Apostle would not have directed his son in the faith, to preach the word, be instant^v in season, out of season, were not this the case! Such words are not too many, because necessary. Free me, O God, from the much inward speaking, which, while I fly to thy mercy, I feel in my miserable soul. For my thoughts are not silent, when my tongue is. Many, alas! are my thoughts, which thou knowest to be vain. Grant me not to consent to them; and, if my nature delights in them, grant me to disapprove, and not to dwell on them, even in a slumbering manner. Nor let them be so strong, as to proceed to any thing active; let my will, my conscience, be safe from them under thy defence. When we come to thee, many of those things we now say, shall cease, and thou shalt remain alone all in all, and we shall without end say one thing, praising thee in one, being made one in thee. What is thine in these books may thine acknowledge; if there be anything of mine, may thou and thine forgive!

On Augustine's Sermons I shall make only one remark. The reader would not think them to be the works of the learned and eloquent author of the city of God. But we must remember, that in them he was addressing not scholars, but the populace. They are plain and simple, but weighty and serious. He follows his own pastoral rules, and is himself the preacher he describes.

Amidst the many arduous and laborious employments of Augustine, in support of the doctrines of Christianity, and in the pastoral care, he yet found time to manage a large epistolary correspondence, a great part of which is preserved, and some few specimens of it shall close this chapter.

The correspondence between him and the famous Jerom, the monk of Palestine, begins with the 8th, and ends with the 19th epistle. The principal subject of it was the reprehension of St. Peter by St. Paul, mentioned in the 2d chapter to the Galatians. Jerom, following the stream of the Greek expositors, who had gone before him, and who imitated the vicious mode of Origen, had asserted, that Paul could not seriously blame Peter for that which he had practised himself, in the

circumcision of Timothy, and that, therefore, his rebuke of Peter was an officious lie, in which the two Apostles understood one another in private, and that the design was, to deceive the people with a charitable view. Jerom,² it seems, carried his admiration of both the Apostles to a superstitious excess, and could not bear to think of Peter being really found fault with for dissimulation. To maintain the honour of Peter, he is driven to undertake the vindication of deceit, when employed for a charitable purpose, and, what is worse, to fix the stain of a lie on a part of the revealed word of God, and to represent Paul, when writing by inspiration, as guilty of falsehood. Such mean and dangerous views attend superstition and self-righteous formality! Nor have I seen a practical case, which more evidently shewed the low declining taste of godliness in these times.

Augustine, jealous of the honour of the divine word, and sensible of the danger of admitting falsehood, either into the books of inspiration, or into common life, with the same zeal that moved him to write against lying of all sorts, undertakes to clear up the subject, and, with great accuracy, explains the whole transaction, in the manner which we saw stated in the former volume.⁷ Two essential points of Christianity are connected with his exposition, namely, the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ Jesus, and the duty of abstaining from deceit of the tongue of all kinds. He treats all along, however, the aged presbyter with a modesty becoming a junior.

Jerom is chafed to find himself contradicted, defends his interpretation by the authority of Origen its inventor, and seems to rebuke the daring spirit of Augustine, for venturing out of the common road, and advises him, if he burned with a strong desire of glory, rather to seek out some champion of his own age, with whom he might contend, than to molest him who was a worn-out veteran. The angry monk seems to have measured the temper of the bishop of Hippo by his own. Learned, as he undoubtedly was, he was still more distinguished for vain glory than for learning, and seems to have known too little of that sincere love of truth, which is connected with humility, the love of God, and the desire of leading souls to heaven, and is unmix'd with all selfish considerations; a love which, doubtless, reigned in the breast of Augustine.

Augustine finding that he had, though without design, given offence, answered to this effect: "In your letters I find many proofs of your kindness, and some marks of your disgust.—Far be it from me to be offended; I shall rather have reason to be thankful, if I be instructed and corrected by

^v Tim. iv.² Tom. ii. from p. 9 to 19.⁷ Vol. I. p. 33.

your correspondence. But, dearest brother, you would not think that I could be hurt by your answers, if you did not feel yourself hurt by my writings. As I cannot believe that you would think of hurting me unjustly, it remains that I own my fault, in having offended you, by those letters, which I cannot deny to be mine. Why do I strive against the stream, and not rather ask pardon? I beseech you, therefore, by the gentleness of Christ, that if I have offended you, you would forgive, lest you be induced by hurting me in return, to render evil for evil." And he goes on in a strain of mildness very uncommon among controversialists, nor could I observe any thing in the whole course of the debate, (which is far too long to quote,) that ought justly to give offence to Jerom. So unreasonably has our author been censured for heat and temerity, by writers who seem not to have been much acquainted with his works.* But these are faults vastly remote from Augustine, nor do I know any human author, ancient or modern, who dealt in controversy, so remarkably free from censoriousness and malignity. "I was much affected, says he, with the conclusion of your letter, in which you say, I wish I could embrace you, and by mutual conference teach or learn something. I say, for my part, I wish at least we lived nearer one another, that we might confer together more easily by letter. For I see there neither is nor can be so much knowledge of the Scriptures in me as in you. If I have any ability this way, I employ it in the service of God. Nor have I leisure, because of ecclesiastical occupations, to attend to more Scriptural studies than those which relate to the pastoral care."

In the same letter he deeply laments the fierce quarrel which had arisen between Jerom and Rufinus, and which, at that time, made a great noise in the Christian world. "I confess I was much affected, that so grievous a discord should arise between two such intimate friends, united in a bond of union, well known to almost all the churches. I saw in your letters what pains you took to moderate your anger. Wo to the world because of offences! Truly that Scripture is fulfilled, because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. But why do I lament this of others, since I know not what I myself shall do? I may with difficulty, perhaps, know myself at present, but what I shall be hereafter I know not.—While I am refreshed with your kind words, I am again stimulated with the keenest grief, to see two men, to whom God had given to suck the honey of his word together in the sweetest friendship, fall into such a state of virulent hosti-

lity. Wo is me, I would fall at your feet, I would weep as long as I could, I would intreat as much as my affections would permit, now each one for himself, now both for each other, and for others, and particularly the weak for whom Christ died, who now behold, your animosities with great danger of hurt to themselves. But I tell you that my concern was really deep and strong, when I found you were really offended with me, and it has led me to be more prolix, perhaps, than I ought."

This is a specimen not only of the moderate temper, but also of the ardent charity, which every where appears in the writings of this author. Jerom himself was moved, and begs that the debate might be closed on both sides. And he appears ever after to have both esteemed and loved Augustine.

The people of Madaura sent a person, named Florentius, to Augustine, with a letter, desiring his assistance in some secular affair. The inhabitants of this place were as yet devoted to idolatry, and, through an insincerity very common with profane and careless minds, they addressed their epistle, "to Father Augustine, in the Lord, eternal salvation," and closed it with these words, "we wish you, Sir, in God and his Christ, for many years to rejoice in your clergy." It behoved not him, who had written a book in defence of strict unequivocal truth in all things, to pass these compliments unnoticed. He tells the Madaurians* that he had, as far as God permitted, attended to the business of Florentius, and then proceeds to expose the inconsistency of such professions with their idolatrous practices. On the first sight of them he owns he was suddenly struck with a belief of their conversion, or at least with a hope, that they desired to be converted by his ministry. "I asked the bearer of your letter, says he, whether ye were Christians, or desired so to be. By whose answer I was grieved, that the name of Christ was, to you, become an object of derision. For I could not think that there was any other Lord, except the Lord Christ, through whom a bishop could properly be called father. If ye wrote this with sincerity, what hinders you from seeking salvation in the same Lord, by whom ye salute us? If ye wrote thus with a jocosely deceitfulness, do ye impose on me the care of your business, in such a manner, that, instead of extolling with due veneration, ye throw out with adulatory insult, that NAME, through which I have power to do any thing for you? Dearest brethren, know that I speak with this inexpressible concern for you, believing that a rejection of my warning will aggravate your condemnation." He goes on to lay open briefly, but strongly, the evidences of Christianity: and then tells them, that "there is an invisible God, the creator of

* How delusive, and yet how common a thing is it, to form our idea of characters from the report of others, rather than from our own knowledge and careful investigation!

all things, whose greatness is unsearchable; that there is a person,^b by whom the invisible Majesty is exhibited, the word, equal to him who begot him; and that there is a SANCTITY, the sanctifier of all things which are done in holiness, the inseparable and undivided communion of the invisible Deity and the Word. Who can look, with a serene and sincere mind, at this Being of beings, which I have laboured to express, though unable to exhibit with accuracy, and, in beholding, forget himself, and obtain eternal salvation, unless confessing his sins, he pull down all the mountains of his pride, and lower himself to receive God his teacher? Therefore the Word humbled himself, that we might more fear to be elated with the pride of man, than to be humbled after the example of God. Christ crucified is our object. Nothing is more potent than divine humility.—I beseech you, if ye named Christ not in vain, in your epistle, that I may not have written this in vain. But if ye did it in unthinking gale of heart, fear him whom the subject world now expects its judge. The affection of my heart, expressed in this page, will be a witness at the day of judgment, to comfort you, if ye believe, to confound you, if ye remain in infidelity.”

The Madaurians, I suppose, expected not such a letter. It deserved to be in part laid before the reader, as a proper example of the open, manly, affectionate method in which Christians should reply to unmeaning compliments, or polite dissimulation. Maximus, a grammarian, answered by a letter,^c partly complimentary, partly satirical, the most specious sentiment of which is, that Pagans and Christians, all believing one God, mean much the same thing. Augustine, in reply, gives him to understand, that the subject requires not levity, but seriousness, and that, by the help of the one living and true God, he will discuss these things more at large, when he shall perceive him to be in good earnest, giving him to understand, that the Christians in Madaura worshipped none but the living and true God.

A letter to Macedonius, concerning the road to true felicity,^d deserves the serious perusal of every philosopher. Men, who seek happiness from themselves, though Christians in form, are, in effect, on the same plan as the ancient Stoics, whose proud pretences are justly ridiculed in this letter. Our author owns, that extreme torments would make life miserable, if the subject of them were destitute of hope, even though he were possessed of some virtues. He describes the way of felicity to lie through a course of humility, of faith, of the love of God and our

neighbours, and of the hope of a future life of bliss.

In reply to Dioscorus,^e he justly guards him against the curious and presumptuous spirit of philosophizing, and dares to pronounce, in opposition to Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and several others of the fathers, that Christian piety needs not the assistance of secular instruction, but ought to depend solely on the Scriptures, and cautions his friend against the pride of secular learning, representing humility to be the first, the second, the third, the all in true religion, as Demosthenes said of delivery in Oratory. Here is another point, in which we see the revival of apostolical truth in the West, by the grace of God, under the hand of Augustine.

In his letter to Proba, on prayer,^f he gives a sound and judicious exposition of the Lord's prayer; and observes, that it is so full and comprehensive, that though a man may pray in other words, and those of great variety, yet every lawful subject of prayer may be reduced to one or other of the petitions which it contains. Proba was a rich widow, and had a numerous family, and it was an instance of candour in Augustine, when we consider the large extension and fashionableness of the monastic spirit at that time, that he does not hint to her a word of advice to follow the custom of the religious in that age, but contents himself with directing her to serve God in her present station. He advises her to be a DESOLATE WIDOW^g in her frame and spirit, looking for heavenly things, not earthly, and shews within how small a compass our prayers for temporal things ought to be confined.

As a remedy against much speaking in prayer, he advises to utter short and quick ejaculations, rather than long continued petitions, if the mind be not in a fervent state; but if the spirit be intent and vigorous, the petitions, he thinks, may be prolonged without any danger of offending against our Lord's precept in the sermon on the mount. And he speaks in an instructive manner on the office of the Holy Spirit, as interceding for the saints with unutterable groanings. The great object in prayer, he observes, should constantly be, the enjoyment of God; and he adds, that however inadequate the believer's conceptions be, yet he has a distinct idea of his object; so distinct, that you can never impose on a real saint by offering him something else in the room of it. He knows what he wants, and he knows that this or that is not the thing which he wants. The whole epistle, if we except a few fanciful disquisitions, after the manner of Origen, is excellent, and breathes a superior spirit of godliness.

^b I use the word, Person, because I can scarce otherwise express the author's meaning: but it is fair to tell the reader, that there is nothing for it in the original.

^c Ep. 43.

^d Ep. 52.

^e Ep. 56.

^f Ep. 121.

^g Tim. v. 6.

One Cornelius wishing to receive from him a consolatory letter, on account of the loss of his wife,¹ Augustine, who knew that, notwithstanding this request, he lived in the excess of uncleanness, tells him, in allusion to the words of Cicero against Cataline, "I could wish to be gentle, I could wish, in so great dangers, not to be negligent; but can a bishop patiently hear a man, who lives in sin, with greediness asking for a panegyric on his godly spouse, to mitigate his sadness on account of her decease?" He goes on to exhort him to repentance, with as much severity as might be expected from a faithful pastor of the mildest temper.

In the close of a letter to Florentina,¹ he reminds her, "that though she had learned something salutary from him, yet she ought firmly to remember, that she must be taught by the inner master of the inner man, who shews in the heart the truth of what is said, because neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth." While such views of divine teaching prevailed in the church, even all the ashes of superstition could not extinguish the fire of true godliness. It is the infelicity of our times, that not only the profane, but many serious persons are not a little irreverent in their ideas of spiritual illumination; and when I think of the miserable effects of this temper on the human mind, I am at a loss to determine whether I most dislike the childish superstitiousness of Augustine's age, or the proud rationality of the present. To so much greater a degree has profaneness advanced under the latter than under the former.

The letter to Edicia² deserves to be attended to as characteristic of the taste of the times. This woman had, unknown to her husband, made a vow of perpetual continency. In so great reputation, however, were such practices at that time, that her husband consented afterwards to her resolution, and they still lived together, though he would not suffer her to assume the habit of a nun. Some time after, two travelling monks imposed on her simplicity to such a degree, that she gave nearly all her property to them, though she had a son of her own by her husband. Augustine reminds her of St. Paul's direction which she had broken:³ and it is indeed observable, with what wisdom, even the most occasional rules of the divine word are delivered, as the breach of them is ever attended with mischievous consequences. He finds fault with her vow in the first place, because made without her husband's consent, and with her disposal of her property in the second place for the same reason; and, as the husband, incensed at her folly, had now fallen into libidinous practices, he teaches her to humble herself deeply before God, as having

been a great instrument of his fall, and directs her to submit to her husband, to intreat his forgiveness, and to use every healing method in her power. The whole subject is an instance of piety and good sense struggling in the bishop of Hippo, against the torrent of absurdity and fashionable superstition.

At Calama, a colony in Africa, the Pagan interest seems to have much predominated; so that, notwithstanding the imperial laws inhibiting their public rites, the party performed a religious solemnity in the city, and came with a crowd of dancers before the church. The clergy endeavouring to prevent this, the church was attacked with stones. The insult was repeated, and Christians found themselves unable to obtain justice. Their buildings were burned and plundered, one Christian was killed, and the bishop was obliged to hide himself. And so deep-rooted was the prejudice of the colony against Christianity, that the magistrates and men of rank chose to be tame spectators of these enormities. One person alone, a stranger, but as it seems a character of great influence, interposed, saved many Christians, whose lives had been in imminent danger, and recovered much of their property which had been plundered; whence Augustine justly concludes,⁴ how easily the whole mischief might have been checked, had the magistrates done their duty. Nectarius, a Pagan of the place, wrote a neat and genteel letter to the bishop of Hippo, begging his interest with the reigning powers to prevent, as much as possible, the punishment of the guilty. Augustine states to him the facts, as above, and appeals to his conscience, whether it was possible or right for government to overlook such crimes. He shews, that Christians lived in peace and good will toward all men, and that he would do the best he could to procure such a temperature of justice and mercy, as might prevent the repetition of these evils, and induce Pagans to take care of their best interests. He tells him, that he himself had been at Calama lately, and had taken occasion to warn them of the danger of their souls. They heard his exhortation, and intreated his interest. "But God forbid," says he, "that it should be any pleasure to me to be supplicated by those who refuse to supplicate our Lord." As Nectarius himself had spoken of his love to his country, Augustine is not sparing in his admonitions to him, to seek an acquaintance with an heavenly country, and preaches to him the truth and excellency of the gospel, as well as exposes, in his usual manner, the futility of Paganism.

= Ep. 202.

¹ Ep. 125.
² Ep. 129.

¹ Ep. 132.
¹ 1 Cor. vii. 5.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISCELLANEOUS PARTICULARS CONCERNING
AUGUSTINE.

I HAVE comprized, in several distinct chapters, a variety of matter relating to the bishop of Hippo, for the sake of perspicuity; two more chapters must be added, one containing various articles of his life and conduct, including the account of his death; and the other, a view of his theological character. It is not in my power to gratify the reader with any thing like a regular history of the effusion of the Spirit of God, which took place toward the end of the last, and in the beginning of this century. We have a far more particular account of Augustine's literary works, than of his ministerial. On the whole, however, some genuine information may be collected concerning the great work of God in his day.

The Manichees could not fail to attract a considerable portion of his attention; he had himself suffered extremely through their means; they abounded in Africa, and God abundantly blessed his labours in opposing their doctrines, and in recovering souls which had been seduced. One instance, to the honour of divine grace, deserves to be recorded in the very words of the writer. "Not only I Possidonius, who write this life, but also other brethren, who lived together with the bishop in Hippo, know that he once said to us, being at table together: 'Did you take notice of my sermon to-day in the church, that its beginning and end were not according to my custom, that I did not finish what I proposed, but left my subject in suspense?' We answered, we were at the time astonished, and now recollect it. 'I believe, said he, the reason was, because the Lord, perhaps, intended some erroneous person in the congregation, through my forgetfulness and mistake, to be taught and healed; for, in his hand are we and our discourses. For, while I was handling the points of the question proposed, I was led into a digression, and so, without concluding or explaining the subject in hand, I terminated the argument rather against Manicheism, on which I had no design to have spoken a word, than concerning the matter proposed.' Next day, or two days after, so far as I can remember, came a merchant called Firmus, and while Augustine was sitting in the monastery, in our presence, he threw himself at his feet, shedding tears, intreating his and our prayers, and confessing that he had lived many years a Manichee, that he had vainly spent much money in the support of that sect, and that,

by the bishop's discourse, he had, through divine mercy, been lately convinced of his error, and restored to the church. Augustine and we inquired by what sermon in particular he had been convinced; he informed us; and as we all recollected the series of the discourse, we admired and were astonished at the profound counsel of God for the salvation of souls, and we glorified and blessed his holy name, who, when, whence, and as he pleases, by persons knowing and unknowing, works out the salvation of men. From that time the man devoting himself to God, gave up his business, and, improving in piety, was, by the will of God, compelled against his own will in another region to receive the office of Presbyter, preserving still the same sanctity; and, perhaps, he is yet alive beyond sea."

Augustine detected, also, the base and blasphemous practices of the Manichees, and thus guarded the minds of the unwary. One of them, by name Felix, coming to Hippo to sow his sentiments, Augustine held a public dispute with him in the church, and, after the second or third conference, Felix owned himself convinced, and he received the gospel.

Arianism also being introduced into Africa by the Goths, who professed it, engaged the attention of Augustine, and he exerted himself in a controversy with Maximinus their bishop.

Of his labours against Pelagianism, it will now only be needful to say,* that he lived to see the fruit of them in the growth of Christian purity, both in his own church and in other parts of Africa.

While he thus endeavoured to promote the cause of piety, he was always observed to bear with much patience and meekness the irregularities of the perverse, and to be more disposed to mourn over them with grief, than resent them with anger.

To the manifold labours of this bishop in preaching, visiting, and writing, was added the troublesome employment of hearing causes. For according to the rules of 1 Cor. vi. the Christians of Hippo used to bring matters of controversy before the bishop. And the examination and decision of these engaged him till the hour of repast, and sometimes he was employed in them fasting the whole day. Certainly it is not reasonable that a Christian pastor should be steadily employed in such things: but Augustine, following the customary practice of the time, made it subservient to the purest purposes. He had by this an opportunity of examining the dispositions of his people, and their improvements or defects in faith and good works, and he explained to them, occasionally, their duties as Christians, by opening

* Possidonius Vita Aug.

* Possidonius.

to them the word of God, by exhorting them to piety, and by rebuking sinners, and in all this he acted with perfect disinterestedness.

In attendance on councils he was frequent, and in them he distinguished himself in the defence both of Christian doctrine and discipline. In ordaining clergymen, he took care to follow the custom of the church, and to act with the concurrence of the majority of the people.* His dress, furniture, and diet, were moderated between extremes; and it will deserve to be mentioned, as an instance of superiority to popular superstition, that he always drank wine, but with great moderation. He constantly practised hospitality; and at table encouraged reading or argument; and as his spirit, ever humble and tender since his conversion, could not bear the too fashionable mode of detraction and slander, he had a distich written on his table, which intimated, that whoever attacked the characters of the absent, were to be excluded.[†] Nor was he content with a formal declaration; he seriously warned his guests to abstain from defamation. "On one occasion, says his biographer, some bishops, his intimate friends, breaking the rule in conversation, he at length was so much roused as to say, that either those lines must be erased from the table, or he himself would rise from the midst of the meal, and go into his bed-chamber; and of this I and others who were present are witnesses."

He was conscientiously attentive to the wants of the poor, and sedulously relieved them out of the revenues of the church, or the oblations of the faithful. And, in answer to the invidious complaints of some, concerning the riches amassed by the church, he freely offered to give them up to any of the laity, who would take the charge of them. Doubtless the growth of superstition was even then bringing on that accession of wealth to the clergy, which afterwards grew to so enormous a height. But purer hands than those of Augustine never handled the possessions of the church; he seems chargeable, even with inattention to his own rights; as he committed the whole of the temporals to his clergy in succession, and never made himself sufficiently acquainted with particulars to correct any mismanagement, from his own inspection. He lived himself perfectly unconnected with the world, at one table, and in one house with his clergy, and never purchased house or land. He checked, also, the fashionable method of men's leaving their possessions to the church, whenever he saw reason to think that the testators had near relations, who, in justice and equity, had a preferable claim to their effects. With much pleasure did he withdraw as soon as possible

from any secular cares which he had not been able to avoid, that he might give himself wholly to divine things. Hence he always remained, as much as possible, content with old buildings and utensils, lest he should be entangled with concerns of this nature. Yet, to relieve the indigent, and to redeem captives, he scrupled not to sell the vessels of the church, after the example of Ambrose.

His abstinence from the society of women we should think, in our times, to have been carried beyond the due bounds; yet it hindered not his provident care for their spiritual welfare.

A little before his death he was employed in revising and correcting his works. This care produced the publication of his *RETRACTATIONS*, the chief use of which book is, that it enables us to fix, with a considerable degree of precision, what were his *GENUINE* works and thoughts. It pleased God, however, not to suffer him to depart this life without a cloud of grievous affliction; and the relish of heaven, after which for many years he had panted with uncommon ardour, was quickened still more by a bitter taste of the evils of this life in declining age.

Genseric, king of the Vandals, invaded Africa, and made a dreadful desolation. To the tender mind of Augustine the devasta-

* The tenderness of his spirit, on one occasion, led him into an error in conduct, which much afflicted him. Fussala was a little city in the extremity of his diocese, forty miles from Hippo. The country about it was full of Donatists; and their re-union to the church was accompanied with much difficulty. The priests sent by Augustine, on account of the distance, was not capable of serving the people as he could wish; and he at length determined to settle a bishop there, who should undertake the charge of Fussala and the neighbouring district. As soon as he had found a proper priest, he desired the primate of Numidia to come over, and, in conjunction with himself, to ordain him. The priest, whom he had chosen, retracted, and the primate was arrived. Augustine was unwilling to send him back without doing the business, and, through the facility of his temper, was induced to present, for ordination, a young man named Anthony, whom he had from infancy educated in his monastery, who had never been tried as he ought to have been. The bishop of Hippo had soon occasion to repent of his good nature. The young prelate was complained of for rapacity and licentiousness by his flock, and was too scandalous in his manners to be endured any longer. His connection with Fussala was therefore dissolved by a formal sentence. Anthony, however, appealed to the bishop of Rome, who was inclined to support him. Augustine insisted on the propriety of his expulsion, and maintained, that compassion for the man himself, as well as for the people, whom he had so grossly abused, required that the sentence should be supported, lest he should be hardened still more in iniquity. Anthony himself made restitution of the sums of which he had defrauded them; yet he prevailed afterwards on the primate of Numidia, to believe him innocent, and to interest himself in his favour. The spirit of Augustine, then threescore and eight years of age, was much broken with this affair. He condemned his own imprudence, and observed, that the danger, into which Anthony had cast both himself and the people, so much affected him, that he was almost resolved to relinquish the episcopal office, and bewail his error, the remainder of his days, in privacy.* As it appears that Augustine still governed the church of Fussala after this, it seems that the dispute was settled to his satisfaction, and that Anthony was not restored to his see.† The story deserved to be noticed, as illustrating the church-discipline of the times, and the character of Augustine.

* Pomponius.

† Quiaquis amat dictis abentum rodere vitam,
Hanc mem-am vitam novit esse sibi.—Poss.

* Ep. 200.

† Ep. 224.

tion of the country, the cruelties inflicted on the pastors, the desolation of churches, and the destruction of all church-order which ensued, must have been peculiarly afflicting. Count Boniface, one of the greatest Roman heroes of those times, undertook the defence of Hippo against the Barbarians. He had not been without convictions of divine things, and Augustine, who was intimate with him, had endeavoured to improve those convictions to salutary purposes. But, to seek human glory, and the honour which cometh from God only, at the same time, was found to be incompatible. Boniface gained a shining reputation, and followed the world. In these trying times the bishop of Hippo again endeavoured to draw him from the love of the world to God; and Boniface seems all along to have sinned reluctantly. What God might do for him at last, during the time that he lived after the mortal wound, which he received in a duel, we know not. The man, however, was brave and sincere, and had a steady regard for men of real godliness. He defended Hippo for fourteen months, which, after that time, with all Africa, fell under the power of the Vandals.

But Augustine was taken away from the evil to come. While he mourned under the miseries of the times, in company with Possidonius and a number of bishops, who had fled for shelter to Hippo, he told them, that he had prayed, either that God would free them from the siege, or endure his servants with patience, or take him out of the world to himself. In the third month of the siege he was seized with a fever, which ended in his dissolution, in the year 430. He lived seventy-six years, forty of which he had been a presbyter or bishop. He used to say, that a Christian should never cease to repent, even to the hour of his death. He had David's penitential psalms inscribed on the wall in his last sickness, and he read and wept abundantly; and for ten days before he expired, he desired to be uninterrupted, that he might give himself wholly to devotion, except at certain intervals. He had preached the word of God constantly, till his last sickness. He left no will: he had neither money nor lands to leave. He left his library to the church. Of his own relations he had taken competent care before. "In his writings, says Possidonius, the holy man appears: but those who could have heard and seen him speak in public, and particularly in private conversation, would have seen still more." Pity it is, that a man, who had known him for forty years, should have left us so imperfect an account. But the vigour of the human mind was then much declined; and superstition made men childish, though it did not destroy the spirit of piety.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THEOLOGY OF AUGUSTINE.

THE serious reader will be naturally led to inquire what became of the African churches after Augustine's death, from a consideration of their mournful condition in external things at that time. It is ever to be remembered, that the real prosperity of the church is not to be estimated by outward circumstances. The Roman empire was dissolving on all sides; and its fairest provinces in Africa fell into barbarous hands at the time of Augustine's death. But the light which, through his means, had been kindled, was not extinct; for, as it depended not on the grandeur of the Roman empire, so neither was it extinguished by its decline. We shall have an opportunity of visiting Africa again, and at present shall close the whole narrative of Augustine with a brief view of his theology. The subject is important, not only as tending to illustrate the revival of the gospel in the West in his time, but also as exhibiting the views of the best and wisest Christians in Europe from that period to the days of Luther. For a thousand years and upwards the light of divine grace, which shone here and there in individuals, during the dreary night of superstition, was nourished by his writings, which, next to the sacred Scriptures, were the guides of men who feared God; nor have we in all history an instance of so extensive utility derived to the church from the writings of men.

From the review of the Pelagian controversy, the attentive reader will see, that the article of justification* must be involved in Augustine's divinity; and doubtless it avingly flourished in his heart, and in the hearts of many of his followers; yet the precise and accurate nature of the doctrine itself seems not to have been understood by this holy man. He perpetually understands St. Paul's term to justify, of INHERENT RIGHTEOUSNESS, as if it meant, SANCTIFICATION; still he knew what faith in the Redeemer meant; and those parts of Scripture, which speak of forgiveness of sins, he understands, he feels, he loves; but St. Paul's writings concerning justification he understands not sufficiently, because the precise idea of that doctrine entered not formally into his divinity.

I have given, if I mistake not, the outlines of Augustine's views in this most important Christian doctrine. It had been pitifully suffocated, as it were, in the rubbish of the growing superstition, and had been gradually sinking in the church from Justin's days to his own. And I more admire, that

* I have introduced here a few sentences out of the Theological Miscellany for Sept. 1785, taken from an Essay on Justification, which I wrote in that publication.

he was enabled to recover its constituent parts so well as he did, than that he did not arrange and adjust them perfectly. Mosheim is pleased to represent him as a contradictory writer. I suspect that this writer's prejudices warped his understanding. In truth, if our author's sentiments be understood, he will appear, from his own plan, to be one of the most consistent writers in the world; and, if we make allowance for his mistake in the point just mentioned, which yet he implicitly, though not explicitly understands, few writers, I think, in any age, may be read with more profit.

To what has been delivered from his writings on the subject of justification, little need here be added. Two quotations deserve to be read on account of the solid truth which they contain. "He was made sin, as we are made righteousness, not our own, but of God; nor in ourselves but in him, as he was made sin, not his own, but ours; nor was he appointed so in himself, but in us."

See this blessed doctrine illustrated experimentally in his exposition on the 130th psalm, 2, 3, 4. "Behold, he cries under the load of his iniquities. He looked round himself, he surveyed his life, he saw it on all sides covered with flagitiousness; wherever he looked, he found no good in himself. And he saw on all sides so great and so many sins, that trembling as it were, he cried out, If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who shall stand? for he saw almost the whole of human life surrounded with sins, like barking dogs; all consciences to be upbraided; not a holy heart to be found that could presume on its own righteousness; which, because it cannot be found, therefore let every heart rest on the mercy of the Lord his God, and say, if thou, Lord, &c. But what is my hope? there is a propitiation with thee." So constantly, in all ages, do real good men feel alike on this subject: the humble shall hear and be glad.

The peculiar work for which Augustine was evidently raised by Providence was, to restore the doctrine of divine grace to the church. Philosophy had corrupted it partially under Justin, far more completely under Origen. What wonder? To trust in ourselves, was the avowed boast of all the Philosophers. An idea of Providential kindness in external things, floated in the minds of some; but virtue and every internal excellence they expected only from themselves. In this they only copied the impressions of

that self-righteousness, which is natural to all. The distinguishing glory of the gospel is to teach humility, and to give God his due honour; and Augustine was singularly prepared for this by a course of internal experience. He had felt human insufficiency completely, and knew, "that in himself dwelt no good thing." Hence he was admirably qualified to describe the total depravity and apostacy of human nature, and he described what he knew to be true. Thus, in the West the doctrine of grace was happily revived; and romantic theories, built on mere reasonings, gave way to scriptural truths, supported by experience. And, in all ages, in spite of pride and prejudice, the doctrine of grace has this advantage over the minds of men, that conscience, wherever it is awakened to do its office, always speaks in its favour.

The rise and progress of Pelagianism gave Augustine an opportunity of illustrating the doctrine of grace in the strongest manner. He himself was by no means forward and urgent in the work. Those, who have spoken of him as heated with the spirit of controversy, knew not Augustine. He was rather slow and cautious in controversy, and so are all men of argumentative minds and humble dispositions. He was by no means at first so clear in his ideas of salvation being altogether of grace, as he afterwards was: particularly, that faith was altogether the gift of God, was not a proposition so clear to his mind, till deeper experiences and more attentive search of the Scriptures confirmed him in the truth. When, in his inquiries after divine truth, he was led to see and to be fully convinced of the total apostacy of man, and when he reflected, that he himself was changed by effectual grace, not only without the co-operation, but even in spite of the resistance, of his nature, he was gradually brought to acquiesce in St. Paul's views of predestination. It was a doctrine, that with him followed experimental religion as a shadow follows the substance, it was not embraced for its own sake. He wrote sparingly, however, upon it for a long time, content to give plain scripture-testimonies, and fearful of involving the bulk of readers in inextricable labyrinths of confusion.

It is the impious boldness of heretics avowedly opposing divine truths, because they are above their reason, which at length necessitates modest and cautious spirits to speak out more plainly concerning the deep truths of God, lest they should leave them to the insults of the enemy. In the farther progress of the controversy the most daring attempts were made to erase from men's minds all ideas of grace; and the specious attempts of Semi-Pelagianism in France seemed ready to overthrow the arguments of Augustine in the minds of many. The Eastern church for the

* Enchirid ad Lauron. C. 41.

• Hear Tully de Nat. Deor. Virtutem nemo unquam Deo ascriptam retulit, nihil enim recte; propter virtutem omnia fore laudamus, et in virtute recte gloriamur, quod non contingeret, si donum a Deo, non a nobis haberemus. It is so sufficient, to tell the English reader, that in this sentence the same self-sufficiency of the human heart, which mere moral preaching encourages, is expressed by the Pagan philosopher, as the undoubted creed of all mankind.

most part, more philosophical than the Western, was infected with those half views of grace; and, unless the bishop of Hippo meant by silence to give countenance to opinions, supported only by corrupt nature, reasoning pride, and the authority of some great names in the church, it behoved him, to defend the doctrine of efficacious grace more explicitly. He did so at length, particularly in his latter writings;* he proves the truth from Scripture, appealing to its simple grammatical sense; and as the Antinomian contempt of the use of means appeared in some warm, but injudicious admirers of his doctrine, he states this matter, also, with his usual strength of argument and perspicuity, and shews the consistency between the exhortations and the decrees of God.

Another subject, of which the reader, versed in theological controversy, would wish to be informed, is, whether Augustine held "particular redemption." Very few words shall suffice for this. He constantly connects the doctrine of grace with the influences of the Holy Spirit; I cannot find that he does so with the redemption of the Son of God. In one place the text, "who would have all to be saved," is explained by him ambiguously and variously. But in truth, whether Christ died only for the elect, or for all men, was never the object of his controversies, and certainly in his practical discourses he always represents the sacrifice of Christ as universal; so every preacher should do, if he means to profit his hearers. On occasion of the controversies Augustine was objected to, as denying that Christ died for all. But Prosper, his admirer and follower, and as strict a predestinarian as any writer in any age, maintains that Augustine held, "that Christ gave himself a ransom for all." Doubtless the natural and obvious sense of Scripture is the same,[†] and the notion of particular redemption was unknown to the ancients, and I wish it had remained equally unknown to the moderns. But let us mention the peculiar excellence of his theology.

Humility is his theme. A man may hold the doctrines of grace in the clearest manner, yet himself be proud. He may not have a distinct view of some of them, particularly that of which we have been speaking, yet he may be humble; though without some real knowledge of grace it is impossible he should be so. But the true advantage of just and accurate Christian sentiments, is, that they teach humility. Am I obliged to support the doctrines of grace by such arguments as mere human reason, unassisted by revelation,

could invent? No: I confess reason in this sense is beneath them; and, if I be truly humble, I shall be content to bear the scorn of philosophers for the confession. Augustine taught men what it is to be humble before God. This he does every where with godly simplicity, with inexpressible seriousness. And in doing this no writer, uninspired, ever exceeded, I am apt to think ever equalled him in any age. They wrong this father much who view him as a mere controversialist. Practical godliness was his theme, and he constantly connects all his views of grace with humility.[‡]

And few writers have been equal to him in describing the internal conflict of flesh and spirit, mysterious but certain, ignorantly confounded by philosophers with the conflict between reason and passion, and misrepresented by the profane, as enthusiastic. He describes this in a manner unknown to any but those who have deeply felt it; and the Pelagian pretensions to perfection oblige him to say more than otherwise would be needful, to prove that the most humble, and the most holy, have, through life, to combat with indwelling sin.

Two more practical subjects he delights to handle, charity[§] and heavenly-mindedness. In both he excels wonderfully, and I shall only wish young students in divinity to convince themselves of this by reading him. A reference of all things to a future life, and the depth of humble love, appear in all his writings; as in truth, from the moment of his conversion, they influenced all his practice.

* This virtue ever appears conspicuous in Augustine, and perpetually checks the daring and adventurous spirit of investigation, which, as a man of genius and letters, formed a striking part of his character. In speaking of the difficulties attending the doctrine of original sin, he abhors every idea of attempting to solve them in an unscriptural manner. He chooses rather to be content with his ignorance. "Though I now desire, and beg earnestly of God that he will help me out of my ignorance by your means; (he is writing to Jerom,) nevertheless, if I cannot obtain it, I will pray for patience: since we believe in him, with a promise never to murmur, though he doth not lead us into perfect knowledge of some particular things. I am ignorant of many things, more than I can enumerate."

† I do not remember to have seen a controversial writer of so charitable a spirit as Augustine, in matters of dispute. The proofs of this are endless. Take a single instance, and see how he treats an opponent. "If, in the heat of the dispute, an injurious word may have escaped him, I am willing to think it arose from the necessity of supporting his opinions, rather than from the design of offending me. For when I am a stranger to the temper of a man, I think it much better to have a good opinion of him, than to blame him too hastily. Perhaps he had a kind intention, desiring to undeceive me. In that case I am obliged to him for his good will, though I am under a necessity of disapproving his sentiments."

‡ His own practice, which he mentions, deserves to be attended to by all controversialists: "When I answer any person in speaking or writing, though provoked by contumelious language, so far as the Lord allows to me, I bridle myself, and restrain the spurs of vain indignation; I consult for the hearer or reader, and thus endeavour not to be superior to another in railing, but to be more salutary by convincing him of his error." A. 3. against Petilian.

§ Letters to Jerom, Aug. Ep. 165.

† Ep. 165.

* In the foregoing deduction I have attended to the progress of things, as they appear from the publication of Augustine's works at different times. To cite particular passages would be tedious; to those who read him for themselves needless, to those who do not uninteresting.

† See particularly 1 Tim. ii.

For he never seems to have lost his first love. Hence there is manifest in his works a singular innocence of spirit. No pride, no self-conceit, no bitterness ever discover themselves in any expression. Calm, equable, modest, cautious of offending, never pathetic, except when roused by zealous love of God and his neighbour; these are the lights in which he constantly exhibits himself. The times were highly unfavourable, the defects of superstition often cloud his writings; yet, at intervals, he vigorously struggles against it, and in one passage particularly laments the growing servilities, the straining at a gnat, and the swallowing of a camel, owning that he conformed, through love of peace and charity, to some things.

His own words will deserve to be quoted, as they evidence the power of good sense and divine grace united in withstanding the prevailing torrent. "I cannot approve the new practices introduced almost with as much solemnity as sacraments; neither dare I censure them too freely, lest I should give offence to any one; but it grieves me, that so many salutary precepts of Scripture should be held cheap, while our religion abounds with commandments of men.—Therefore, as to all those customs which are not contained in the Scripture, ordained by councils, or sanctioned by the tradition of the church, and which do not carry in their appearance an evident reason for their existence, I am free to say, they ought to be laid aside. Admit, it cannot be proved, that they are contrary to the faith; yet they burden religion with servile usages, which God, in his mercy, intended to make free: in this respect the condition of the Jews is more tolerable; they are subject indeed, but to divine ordinances, not to the precepts of men. However, the church surrounded as she is with chaff and tares, endures many things, yet she cannot tolerate what is contrary to Christian faith and practice." He particularly condemns the custom of divining by the gospel, and of managing temporal concerns according to words which strike the eye at the first opening of the book.

His conduct toward the Donatists bids the fairest for reprehension: but he acted sincerely; you differ with him in judgment, it is impossible for you to blame his temper and spirit, if you read him fairly. He carefully checks his people for calumniating the Donatists, and is constantly employed in moderating and healing.

Finally, in Ethics he is superior to most. On the subject of veracity and faithfulness to oaths, and in general in the practice of justice, in the love of mercy, and in walking humbly with his God, as he wrote most admirably, so he practised most sincerely.

CHAPTER X.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF JEROM.

THIS renowned monk was born at Stridon, a town in the confines of Dalmatia and Pannonia, under the emperor Constantine, in the year 331. The place was obscure, and was rendered still more so by the desolations of the Goths. Nor is it a very clear case whether it ought to be looked on as part of Italy or not.⁴ That Jerom was of a liberal and opulent family, appears from the pains taken with his education, which was finished at Rome, that he might there acquire the graces of latinity. He was in truth the most learned of the Roman Fathers, and was eminent both for genius and industry. He was brought up in Christianity from infancy, and hence, like other good men, who have had the same advantages, he appears never to have known the extreme conflicts with indwelling sin, which, to later converts, have given so much pain, and often have rendered them more eminently acquainted with vital religion.

After his baptism at Rome, he travelled into France, in company with Bonosus, a fellow-student. He examined libraries, and collected information from all quarters; and, returning into Italy, he determined to follow the profession of a monk: a term, which did not at that time convey the modern idea of the word. In Jerom's time it meant chiefly the life of a private recluse Christian, who yet was fettered by no certain rules nor vows, but acted according to his own pleasure. Such a life suited the disposition of a studious person like Jerom. He was, however, made a presbyter of the Church, but never would proceed any farther in ecclesiastical dignity. He spent four years in the deserts of Syria, reading and studying with immense industry. A commentary on the prophet Obadiah, which he published, bore strong marks of juvenile indiscretion, as he afterwards frankly owned. And here, by the assistance of a Jew, who visited him, Nicodemus-like, in the evenings, lest he should give umbrage to his brethren, he acquired the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and with indefatigable labour he studied also the Chaldee and the Syriac.

On his return to Rome, he became intimate with Paula, the illustrious descendant of the Pauls, so famous in Roman story, with Marcella, and other opulent ladies. The monastic life, which had long flourished in the East, was only beginning to be fashionable in the West. The renowned Athanasius, and his Egyptian friends, rendered re-

* Ep. to Januarius, 119.

⁴ Eras. Life of Jerom, prefixed to his works.

spectable, during their exile at Rome, by their sufferings for the faith, contributed to throw a dignity on such a course of life; and the zeal of Jerom nursed the same spirit among serious persons. The ladies I have mentioned were hence induced to impart a celebrity to the monastic taste by their own example.

Paula, her daughter Eustochium, her son-in-law Pammachius, Marcella, and others, admired and revered Jerom; and he, whose temper was choleric and imperious to a great degree, seems to have lived in much harmony with females, probably because he more easily gained submission from them than from persons of his own sex.

Spleen and calumny hastened the departure of Jerom from Rome. This great man had not learned to command his passions, and to disregard the breath of fame. Unjust aspersions on his character affected him with a very blameable acrimony. He retired again to the East: there several of his admirers followed him. He chose Bethlehem as the seat of his old age, where Paula erected four monasteries, three for the women, over which she presided, and one for the men, in which Jerom lived the rest of his life, enjoying at times the society of his learned friends. He instructed the women also in theology, and Paula died after having lived twenty years in the monastery.

I shall not spend any time in vindicating the chastity of Jerom, because his whole life was a sufficient answer to calumny in that respect. He was certainly serious in the very best sense of the word, and died in the 91st year of his age, in the year 422.

Yet it is to be lamented, that a man of so great sincerity, and of a mind so vigorous, should have been of so little service to mankind. The truth is, his knowledge of theology was contracted and low. He confessed, that while he macerated his body in the deserts, he was thinking of the pleasure and delights of Rome. He understood not the true gospel mystery of mortifying sin, and, by his voluntary humility and neglect of the body, added to the fame and splendour of his voluminous but ill-digested learning, he contributed more than any other person of antiquity to the growth of superstition. His quarrel with Rufinus is a reproach to both their memories. Yet, of the two, Jerom seems to have been more evangelical in his views; because Origen was erroneous in his doctrines: and it is a sufficient account of so uninteresting a controversy to say, that Rufinus defended, Jerom accused Origen.

For the view of his controversy with Augustine, I must refer the reader to the accounts of that father of the church.

Jerom was, however, humble before God, and truly pious: and of him it must be said, to the honour of Christian godliness, how

much worse a man he would have been, had he not known Christ Jesus, and how much better, if he had known him with more clearness and perspicuity.

The works of a writer so superstitious, though sound in the essentials of Christianity, will not deserve a very particular review. Here and there a vigorous and evangelical sentiment breaks out amidst the clouds. His epistles discover him to have been sincere and heavenly minded, though his temper was choleric. In a letter to Nepotian^a there are various rules worthy the attention of Pastors, concerning the contempt of riches, the avoiding of secular familiarities, and the regulation of external conduct. One observation will deserve to be distinctly remembered, "A clergyman easily subjects himself to contempt, who never represses invitations to dinner; however frequent."

He wrote an epitaph upon the death of this same Nepotian some time after,^c eloquent, pious, pathetic. In this he confesses the doctrine of original sin, and celebrates the victory of Christ over death. He makes an excellent use of the public miseries of the times, by recommending more strongly a practical attention to piety. Hence, also, he makes the best apology which could be invented for his favourite solitude.

In his letter^d to Rusticus the monk, the learned reader who would see a practical comment on St. Paul's cautions against voluntary humility in the Epistle to the Colossians, may behold it in Jerom. He abounds in self-devised ways of obtaining holiness, while the true way of humble faith in Jesus is not despised indeed, but little attended to.

A short letter to Florentius shews genuine humility and acquiescence in Christ, as his sole hope after all his austerities. He calls himself a polluted sinner altogether; "yet, because the Lord sets free the captive, and looks to the humble and the contrite, perhaps he may say to me also, lying in the grave of wickedness, Jerom, come forth." It was this humble faith in Christ, which checked the impetuosity and arrogance of his natural temper, repressed his vain glory, and in some degree changed a lion into a lamb. For Jerom, though exactly formed by constitution and habit, to sustain the character of a Pharisee, was too deeply conscious of internal pollution to be one in reality.

Toxotius, the son of Paula, had married Leta, by whom he had a daughter, whom the grandmother destined to virginity. Jerom writes to the mother,^e advising that the child be sent to Bethlehem when grown up, and promising himself to superintend her education, while an infant, which are useful, but mixed with superstition. Leta's father,

^a Paris Edit. vol. I. 6. G.
^b 15. G.

^c Id. 8. D.
^d 19. G.

it seems, was a Pagan. Jerom, however, despairs not of his conversion: "all things, he says, are possible with God. Conversion is never too late. The thief from the cross passed into Paradise. Despair not of your Father's salvation. A relation of yours, Gracchus, whose very name is expressive of patrician nobility, a few years ago broke in pieces and burnt the images of idolatry, and received the faith of Christ." Behold the spirit of meekness and charity adorning one of the most rugged tempers in the world, and admire the effect of victorious grace in Jerom.

I am disgusted with the repeated lessons of superstition, with which his epistles present us. He knew, however, better things. In a letter to his Paula, he rebuked her immoderate sorrow for the death of her daughter Blesilla, in strains at once evangelical and tender.¹ In a letter to Pammachius,² who became a monk after the decease of his wife Paulina, the daughter of Paula, he speaks with holy rapture on the love of Christ, according to the ideas of the book of Canticles: "Whether you read, or write, or watch, or sleep, let love always sound a trumpet in your ears, let this trumpet excite your soul; overpowered with this love, seek in your bed him whom your soul loveth." How much is it to be regretted, that Jerom and his friends should have so hidden their talent, that persons who loved Christ sincerely, had not learned, like the apostles and first Christians, to profess him in the most public walks of society, and by preaching and conversation, to have instructed mankind in general! But such conduct would have required a self-denial and a charity larger and of a more sublime nature than theirs; to live in the world, and yet remain separate from it, shews a divine strength indeed.

Jerom confesses, that Gregory Nazianzen was his preceptor in theological expositions.³ The Eastern mode, thus caught by Jerom, and pursued by a mind eager, and adorned with learning and eloquence, became highly respected in the West. Jerom, as a theologian, seems greatly inferior to his contemporary Augustine, though in style and diction superior.

In the foregoing century Jovinian, an Italian monk, taught, first at Rome, and afterwards at Milan, some points of doctrine, directly opposite to the growing superstitions. It is not easy to state, with confidence, either the character or the sentiments of the man. His works are lost. The most celebrated teachers of the church opposed him vehemently. Ambrose, Jerom, and Augustine, joined their testimonies against him. The last, indeed, wrote very little, and that little from popular rumour, rather than from any

distinct knowledge of the subject. For the weight of popular prejudice overwhelmed Jovinian speedily, so that his doctrines could never enter Africa, nor give the bishop of Hippo an opportunity of knowing him. Had this been the case, I should have expected, from his candour and judgment, that fair and distinct delineation of Jovinian, which we seek in vain from the choleric and prejudiced Jerom. We have of the latter two books against Jovinian,⁴ intemperate, fierce, and ill-supported by Scripture or argument. I have endeavoured, as well as I can, to discover what were his real opinions;⁵ but, in wading through the torrent of Jerom's abuse, I find no very certain vestiges; such is the violence and intemperance of his spirit and language. One single quotation is all that I can discover, which can be called Jovinian's own, the language of which is barbarous in the extreme, and justifies Jerom's censure upon him in one respect, as a man void of all classical culture and elegance. The sense of it⁶ seems to be this: "Having satisfied those, who were invited to hear me, not for the sake of my glory, but that I may deliver myself from unjust accusations, I sow my field, and visit the new plantations, the tender shrubs, delivered from the whirlpools of vices, fortified by troops. For we know the church, through hope, faith, and charity, inaccessible, invincible. In her there are none immature, every one is teachable; none can subdue her by violence, or elude her by art."

I admire the positiveness of Mosheim in deciding so peremptorily for the character of a man,⁷ of whose writings nothing has come down to us, but a single sentence so barbarous and doubtful. Certainly he opposed the prejudices in favour of celibacy and fasting. A monk himself, he disclaimed any superior dignity or estimation, on account of his abstinence from matrimony; nor did he think, that fasting added any intrinsic excellence to a character. Thus far is certain: and that he saw so much truth in such an age, proves him doubtless to have been a man of strong sense and manly understanding. But, before I dare call him "a worthy opposer of the reigning superstitions," I ought to know his motives. He might be influenced by the pure love of God; the faith of Jesus, and unfeigned humility. He might be moved by a spirit merely prudential, worldly, and even profane. For true Christians and Deists will unite in opposing superstition, from motives very opposite. We are, indeed, always strongly inclined to think well of those persons in past ages, who happened to favour our peculiar sentiments or prejudices; and,

¹ Tom. xi. 7. D.

² Whatever they were, he was condemned in a council held by Ambrose at Milan, as an heretic, and was, by the emperor Honorius, banished to the island Boa.

³ S. G.

⁴ Mosheim, Cent. iv. c. iii. 22.

on the contrary, we are apt to judge harshly of those who thought in a different manner. Does this propensity account for Mosheim's hasty approbation of the character of Jovinian? Whether it does or not in this instance, I cannot but observe, that this sort of mental imbecility forms one of the most capital defects of that ecclesiastical historian; as to myself, I can only say, I endeavour to guard against it.

Let us hear, however, what are the four propositions of Jovinian. I wish I could give them in his own words, instead of those of his adversary. The first is, that virgins, widows, and married women, who have once been washed in Christ, if in other works they differ not, are of the same excellence. Secondly, he endeavours to prove, that those who have been regenerated, cannot be subverted by the devil. The third shews, that there is no distinction in the sight of God, between those who abstain from meats, and those who receive them with thanksgiving. The fourth, that all who keep their baptism, shall be equally rewarded in the kingdom of heaven.

From information so scanty two very opposite opinions may be deduced: first, that Jovinian, blessed with divine illumination, and the faith of God's elect, entered fully into the spirit of apostolical Christianity, condemned the self-righteous taste of the times in ascribing merit to extrinsic excellence, to fasting, and celibacy, recommended them only as external helps of godliness in certain cases, placed all the hope of salvation on the grace of Jesus in unfeigned faith and humility, asserted the perpetuity of this grace in the elect; and, while he reprobated the fictitious virtues of proud men, was zealous for the glory of God and his Christ. Whether this was Jovinian's view or not, it undoubtedly was that of the apostles. If it was his, he was no heretic, as he has been represented, but a faithful confessor of Christ. That which strongly inclines me to hope on the whole, that this was his real character, and that even good men of his age were deceived concerning him, is the soundness with which he interprets Scripture in the few instances to be collected from Jerom's confused account. He observes, that those, who fell, were only baptized with water, not with the Holy Ghost, as appears from the case of Simon Magus, shewing from St. John, that he who is born of God doth not commit sin. He mentions the presence of Jesus at the marriage of Cana in support of his vindication of matrimony, to which Jerom returns an answer too ridiculous to deserve mentioning. There are other things in Jerom's opposition, weak beyond measure, and which shew that sound argumentation was not the talent of this celebrated father.

If, on the other hand, Jovinian opposed

the fashionable austerities from the love of the world, if he held that all sins were really equal, and that the devil had no power at all to draw the regenerate into sin, he might be a Stoic, an Epicurean, an Antinomian, a character very remote from that of a Christian. A little clear information of Jovinian's own life, and even a larger specimen of his writings, might have solved this doubt.

About the beginning of this century Vigilantius, a presbyter, a man remarkable for eloquence, who was born in Gaul, and afterwards performed his ecclesiastical functions in Spain, treading in the steps of Jovinian, exhorted and wrote with much energy against the custom of performing vigils in temples consecrated to martyrs, and against the whole apparatus of pilgrimages, relics, addresses to saints, voluntary poverty, and the like. I have here to regret, as in the former instance, the want of materials for estimating the character of this man, whom Mosheim scruples not to call the good Vigilantius.¹ He quotes indeed Bayle's dictionary; whence I gather, that the presbyter before us was agreeable to that self-conceited sceptic; but the ambiguity remains unremoved. He might oppose superstition from the faith and love of Christ, or from profaneness and sensuality. As no specific blot, however, is affixed to the moral characters of Jovinian and Vigilantius, amidst an intemperate effusion of satire, the probability is, on the whole, that they were pious men, and deserved to be ranked in a very different class from that of heretics.

Jerom wrote apologies for his books against Jovinian,² which gave additional strength to the charges of asperity justly brought against him by many. His commendation of rhetoric is excessive, and his vain glory odious, though it seems unknown to himself. The best instruction to be collected from them is, to see how the defect of Christian principle fails not to appear in the defect of humility, meekness, and love. Augustine and Jerom, in principles and practice, form in this respect a strong contrast. The pieces against Vigilantius deserve the same censure. He absurdly gives to saints a sort of omnipresence and intercessory power.

I have said already, that the contest between Jerom and Rufinus is uninteresting. It is a deplorable evidence of the weakness and corruption of human nature, even in men constantly engaged in religious studies! A sincere and practical attention to the real peculiarities of the gospel, can alone secure the genuine holiness of professors, and mortify the whole body of sin. When Jerom is calm and unruffled, and looks to Jesus Christ in faith and love, he seems quite another man from what he is when engaged in controversy. For a single page of Jovinian or Vigilantius

¹ Mosheim, Cent. v. c. iii. 14.
² 37. D. 43. D. 44. G.

I would gladly give up the whole invectives of Jerom and Rufinus.

It is remarkable, that Jerom confesses the vast obscurity of the whole epistle to the Romans.* To one who studied so much, and whose mind was so clouded with self-righteous superstitions, it must appear in that light. He evidently speaks as one irresolute, embarrassed, and confused. His immensity of verbal learning, in which he much excelled Augustine, was not combined with that luminous perspicuity, and comprehensive judgment of doctrine, which enabled the latter to see his way through various mazes, and to find order and beauty, where the former beheld inextricable confusion. Such is the difference between divine and human teaching!

Hence Jerom, in his very voluminous exposition,† speaks at random; is allegorical beyond all bounds, and almost always without accuracy and precision; lowers the doctrine of illumination in 1 Cor. ii. to things merely moral and practical; hints at something like a first and second justification before God; asserts predestination, and, as it were, retracts it; owns a good will as from God in one place, in another supposes a power to choose to be the whole of divine grace; never opposes fundamental truths deliberately, but though he owns them everywhere, always does so defectively, and often inconsistently. It must be confessed, the reputation of this father's knowledge and abilities has been much over-rated. There is a splendour in a profusion of ill-digested learning, coloured by a lively imagination, which is often mistaken for sublimity of genius. This was Jerom's case, but this was not the greatest part of the evil. His learned ignorance availed, more than any other cause, to give a celebrity to superstition in the Christian world, and to darken the light of the Gospel. Yet, when he was unruffled by contradiction, and engaged in meditations unconnected with superstition, he could speak with Christian affection concerning the Son of God, and the following sentence will shew that he had studied his characters and offices with attention. "Let not the reader wonder, if he find the same person both prince and priest, and bullock, and ram, and lamb; since, in the Scripture, on various accounts, we read him called Lord and God, and man and prophet, and rod and prince, and judge and king, righteousness, apostle, and bishop, arm, servant, begotten, first-begotten, door, way, shepherd, son, child, angel, arrow, wisdom, and many other things, the enumeration of which would fill a book."[‡]

With such liberal amplitude did the church of God anciently conceive of Jesus Christ. It was a marvellous effect of Divine Provi-

dence, that while all other truths were more or less clouded, that which relates to the person of the Son of God, on whom rests the salvation of men, should remain unsullied. From St. John's days to Jerom we have seen the whole church unanimous in a comprehensive view of the Godhead and manhood of the divine Saviour: whoever opposed either could never obtain the free sanction of the church. Imperial violence was ever found necessary to extort the admission of such persons into the church as pastors. This essential article of Christianity seems even to have been studied with the minutest accuracy; and few, perhaps, even of the best modern divines, have attained the precision of the ancients: heresiarchs have not failed to take advantage of this circumstance, and the narrow and imperfect conceptions, which some authors have formed of the person of Jesus Christ, have emboldened them to suppose, that the assertion of the manhood enervates the proof of the Godhead. Inferiority to the Father, confessed in any light, seems to startle many minds unaccustomed to the generous and extensive habits of thinking, in which the fathers excelled on this subject; while yet the answer is so easy to all supposed difficulties of this nature; "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his manhood."

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE WEST.

It is time to take up the connected thread of history again. But the reader must not expect a successive detail of the proceedings of the Roman princes. After the death of Theodosius, the empire was torn by various convulsions, tending, in the West particularly, to its destruction. It is my duty to watch only the real church amidst these scenes; for she lived, while the secular glory of Rome was destroyed. Honorius, the son of Theodosius, reigned there, while his brother Arcadius governed at Constantinople.

Honorius, or, to speak more properly, his ministers, (for he himself was, like Arcadius, a very feeble prince,) protected the external state of the church, and followed the steps of Theodosius in extirpating the remains of idolatry, and in supporting orthodoxy, against the Donatists, and all heretics. The superior advantages of a Christian, above a Pagan establishment, even in times of such decline as the present were, appear in the humanity of a number of laws and edicts, by which idolatrous impurities and savage games were abolished, and due care was taken of the needy and the miserable. In what, for instance, but in a Christian government, shall

* 58. D. Tom. ult. of vol. I.

† Vol. ii. throughout.
Comm. on Ezek.

we find so humane a law as that of Honorius enacted in the year 409, by which judges are directed to take prisoners out of prison every Sunday, and to inquire if they be provided with necessaries, and to see that they be properly accommodated in all things?

In this reign, Rome was sacked by the Goths, and an opportunity was given for the exercise of many Christian virtues, by the sufferings to which its inhabitants were exposed. But enough has been said of this subject in the review of Augustine's city of God.

Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, was one of the greatest ornaments of Gaul in this century. He was a person of quality, and exercised the profession of a counsellor in the former part of his life. Amator,* his predecessor in the See, foresaw however, I apprehend, some symptoms of grace in him, and ordained him deacon. A month after the decease of Amator, he was unanimously elected bishop by the clergy, nobility, citizens, and peasants, and was forced to accept the office, notwithstanding the great reluctance which he discovered. He employed himself in the foundation of monasteries, and in enriching the church, while he impoverished himself, and for thirty years, from his ordination to his death, he lived in extreme austerity.

About the year 430, that is about the time of Augustine's death, he visited the island of Great Britain, with an intention to oppose Agricola, the son of a Pelagian bishop called Severinus, who propagated heresy among the churches there. Hence it is probable, that Pelagius, after he had ceased to be famous in the world, had retired into his native country, and there died. Nor is it to be wondered at, that his opinions should there find abettors. Lupus, bishop of Troyes, accompanied Germanus in the mission, which was undertaken on the recommendation of a numerous council in Gaul. Lupus governed his church fifty-two years, and was highly renowned for sanctity. These two bishops, on their arrival, preached not only in the churches, but also in the highways, and in the open country, and vast crowds attended their ministry. The Pelagians came to a conference; the doctrines of grace were debated; the bishops supporting themselves by express passages of Scripture in the hearing of all the people, were allowed to be victorious, and Pelagianism was reduced to silence. At this time the Picts, a race of barbarians who inhabited the north, and the Saxons, a German nation, called in by the Britons, as it is well known, to assist them against the Picts, united their forces against the natives. The latter, terrified at the ap-

proach of the enemy, had recourse to Germanus and Lupus. Many, having been instructed by them, desired baptism, and a great part of the army received it at Easter, in a church which they made of boughs* of trees twisted together. The festival being over, they marched against the enemy, with Germanus at their head. He, still remembering the profession in which he had spent great part of his youth, posted his men in a valley through which the enemy were to pass, surprised, and defeated them. After these things the two bishops returned to the continent. The deacon Palladius being ordained bishop of Scotland, arrived there in the year 431. Scotland had never before seen a bishop, and was in a state of extreme barbarism.

The same year died Paulinus of Nola, who had been bishop there twenty years; he was the intimate friend of Augustine, and appears through the mist of superstition which clouds his narrative, to have been one of the best Christians of the age. He was a mirror of piety, liberality and humility, worthy of a more intelligent age, and of more intelligent writers than those, who have recorded his life. For I choose to dismiss him with this general character, rather than to tarnish his memory with repeating the romances of those, who meant to honour him.

We have seen how the doctrines of grace were defended in Britain, and it is not to be doubted, but this was done with some saving efficacy. In Gaul the doctrine of Semi-Pelagianism still maintained its ground, and Prosper and Hilary, who had written an account of it to Augustine, exerted themselves in defending the doctrines which he had taught. Coelestine, of Rome, supported the same cause, and in the same year he published nine articles, which will deserve some consideration, as they shew that the spark of truth was still alive amidst the mass of corruption in the Western Church, and still, under God, preserved some degree of Christian holiness. In these articles it is owned, that all men are, by nature, under the power of sin, by reason of the fall, from which nothing but grace can deliver any man—that man is not good of himself; he needs a communication of God to him from God himself—nor can a man, though renewed, overcome the flesh and the devil, except he receive daily assistance—that God so worketh upon the hearts of men, that holy thoughts, pious intentions, and the least motion toward a good inclination proceed from God. "We learn also, says Coelestine, what we are to believe from the prayers appointed by the apostles through the world, and observed with uniformity through the whole church; wherein it is petitioned, that faith may be granted

* He foresaw these by the observation, which he made of the frame of his spirit, rather than by any special revelation. From various places in Fleury I have collected this short account of Germanus, and stripping it of the marvellous, have retained only the credible.

to infidels, idolaters, Jews, and heretics; charity to schismatics, repentance to sinners, and regeneration to catechumens. These prayers are not empty forms; their effects are visible in the conversion of many, for which thanks are returned to God. We must confess, that the grace of God prevents the merits of man; that it doth not take away free-will, but delivers, enlightens, rectifies, and heals it. God is willing, such is his goodness, that his gifts should be our merits, and grants an eternal reward to them: he works in us to will and to do according to his pleasure; but his gifts are not idle in us; we co-operate with his grace, and, if we find remission proceeding from our weakness, we immediately have recourse to him. As to the more difficult questions which have been discussed at large, we do not despise them, but need not treat of them. Suffice it that we have declared what we believe essential to the faith."^a

Thus, vigorously and perspicuously did a bishop of Rome maintain the apostolic doctrines, and so strong was the light which, in an age of superstition, had beamed forth from the writings of Augustine. I could not resist the pleasure of adding so valuable a testimony of the continuation of Christian faith in the West.

Palladius, the pastor of Scotland, being dead, Coelestine sent Patrick into the same parts in his stead. He was born in Scotland,^b at a place now called Dunbarton. Having been carried captive into Ireland, and having remained there a few years, in which time he learnt the language and customs of the country, he was by some pirates afterwards conveyed into Gaul; and after various adventures, he returned a volunteer into Ireland, with a view to undertake the conversion of the barbarous natives, who seem, till this time, to have been without any acquaintance with Christianity. It is beautiful to observe the motions of Providence, in causing the confusions of war and desolation to be subservient to the propagation of the Gospel. Patrick, intent only on the cause of Christ amidst all the various scenes in which he was tossed to and fro, was not discouraged by ill success at first. The barbarous Irish refused to hear him, and he returned into Gaul, and spent some time with Germanus, of Auxerre, whose services in Britain have been mentioned. The conversation and example of Germanus inflamed his mind with fresh zeal, and by his advice he went to Rome; that he might be strengthened in his pious views by the authority of Coelestine. From this bishop he received such support and assistance, as enabled him to revisit Ireland, and at length his success was so great, that to this day he

is looked on as the apostle of Ireland. He first taught the Irish the use of letters; and while we pass over in silence the fictions of which these ages are full, there is no reason to doubt but that he was the instrument of real good to the Irish, both with respect to this life and the next; nor ought such events to be omitted in the history of the church of Christ. It were only to be wished, that we knew them more circumstantially. He died about the year 460, in an advanced age.

In the mean time the clergy of Marseilles, who, in the latter times of the Pelagian controversy, with Cassian at their head, had endeavoured to chalk out a middle path between Augustine and Pelagius, propagated Semi-Pelagianism with success, notwithstanding the strenuous endeavours of Coelestine of Rome. Nor ought we to be surprised at this: the doctrine of Semi-Pelagianism strongly recommends itself to the depraved taste of mankind; it divides the work of salvation between free grace and human ability in such a manner, that it both retains a specious appearance of humility toward God, and at the same time flatters the pride of man. Fallen creatures cannot but feel weakness and ignorance in some degree; and therefore they do not easily believe themselves perfectly sufficient for their own salvation; yet they love independence, and struggle to preserve it; and hence it is, that Semi-Pelagian notions are so peculiarly grateful to the nature of corrupt man. But it may be observed, that this very circumstance itself forms an insuperable objection to their truth. That can never be the wisdom of God in a mystery,^c which men in their natural state so readily and cordially approve. Prosper still continued, with the arms of Scripture, to oppose the opinions of Cassian, and to defend the doctrines of the grace of God; Marius Mercator also laboured in the same cause. Gaul and the neighbouring countries no doubt received benefit from their endeavours. Semi-Pelagianism was so far checked, that during the dark ages after this time, the doctrines of grace were cordially received by godly persons, particularly in the monasteries. All, who were thoroughly humbled and contrite, found the comfort of them; while those monks, whose religion was Pharisaic, found the Semi-Pelagian scheme to suit their self-righteous pride.^d In this manner were religious men in the West divided: Cassian's authority prevailed the more, because of the serious and devout spirit which other parts of his writings possessed, or seemed to possess;^e but, as the times grew more

^a 1 Cor. ii.

^b Though this must have been the case for the most part, yet exceptions will occur in the course of this history. There were those whose hearts were better taught than their understandings.

^c I speak ambiguously, because I have no access to Cassian, except indirectly by the short account of Du Pin. I scarce need to say, after the accounts I have given of

corrupt in practice, Semi-Pelagianism gained the ascendant.

About the year 439, Genseric, king of the Vandals, surprised Carthage^c in the midst of peace, and used his victory with great cruelty. He himself was an Arian by profession, as the barbarous nations who had received Christianity generally were. How this happened we have seen before. Nor does it appear, that the Arians were altered in their dispositions. The same unprincipled wickedness, which had ever characterized the party, remained. Genseric shewed the greatest malice against the clergy; drove a number of them from their churches, and martyred many. Indeed the abominations of the times seemed to call for such a scourge. The light of divine grace revived in the West, purified many souls, and fitted them for sufferings. But with the majority both superstition and practical wickedness increased. Carthage itself was sunk in vice; lewdness was amazingly predominant. So deplorable a thing is it for men to depart from the simplicity of Christian faith! the superstitions now increasing daily, only fortified them the more in self-righteousness; and natural depravity, while grace was neglected, grew to an enormous height. Oppression and cruelty domineered at Carthage; and the poor of the place, in the anguish of their misery, were induced to beseech God to deliver the city to the Barbarians.^d

He who informs us of these things is Salvian, priest of Marseilles.^e From him we

good men before his time, that notwithstanding the views of Prosper appear to me, more humble, and holy, and consistently scriptural, yet there might be and there were real good men, on the Semi-Pelagian scheme: for it ought not to be confounded with Pelagianism itself: the theory of this excludes the very idea of grace.

^c Victor Vitens. B. I.

^d The account of a council held at Braga, in Lusitania, which will both illustrate the melancholy situation of civil affairs in this century, (for in the former part of it the council seems to have been held,) and will also throw some light on the state of religion in Portugal, a country which has hitherto furnished us with no memoirs. The bishop Panonian, being president, said, Ye see, brethren, the havoc made by the Barbarians.—Brethren, let our care be for the salvation of souls, fearing lest the miseries of the times should seduce our flocks into the way of sinners; and therefore let us give them an example of suffering in our own persons for Jesus Christ, who suffered so much for us. And as some of the Barbarians are Arians, others idolaters, let us confess our faith. He then declared in few words the articles of a Christian confession, to which they all assented. Elipand, of Coimbra, said; The Barbarians are among us; they besiege Lisbon, in a little time they will be upon us. Let every one go to his abode; let him comfort the faithful, decently conceal the bodies of the saints, and send us an account of the caves where they are deposited. All the bishops having approved of the motion; Panonian added, Go home in peace, except brother Potamius, because his church at Amminius is destroyed, and his country ravaged. Potamius generously answered, I did not receive the episcopal function to sit at my ease, but to labour; let me comfort my flock, and suffer with them for Jesus Christ. You have well spoken, replied the president, God be with you. God maintain you in your resolution, said all the bishops. Let us depart with the peace of Jesus Christ.

At this council ten bishops subscribed to the decrees. Ariabert, of Porto, (I suppose the present Oporto,) wrote

^e Fleury, B. xxiii. vi.

learn, that many nominal Christians attended Pagan sacrifices, and afterwards went to the Lord's supper. Lewdness was so common among them, that after the Vandals became masters of Carthage, they put a stop to the disorders, and obliged the prostitutes to marry. For these barbarians had not yet attained the corrupt refinements of Roman luxury. Salvian very justly observes, that the miseries of these orthodox Christians ought to give no offence, because they were only Christians in name. They were in reality very idolatrous in their practices, and even amidst the horrors of war and public calamities, continued impure and voluptuous. And oppression and injustice were so grievous, that the dominion of the Barbarians was really more tolerable than that of the Romans. It was worth while to mention these things, as containing no improper illustration of the adorable justice of Providence, in punishing the wickedness of nominal Christians, not only at Carthage, but in general in this century through the Western empire. What happened to the ancient Jewish church, when grown wicked and idolatrous, and retaining only the form of religion, happens also to Christian nations. God is glorified by taking the power out of their hand, that they may no longer profane his holy name.

Genseric expelled the bishops from their Sees; and in case of any resistance, he made them slaves for life; and this punishment was actually inflicted on several bishops, and on many laymen of quality. Quodvult Deus, bishop of Carthage, and a number of clergy were expelled, and they fled by sea to Naples. Others having suffered divers torments in Africa were put on board an old bark, and landed in Campania. Arian bishops were now put into possession of the vacant Sees.^f Some bishops, who still remained in the provinces, presented themselves before Genseric, and intreated, that as they had lost their churches and their wealth, they might at least be allowed to remain without molestation in Africa, for the comfort and support of the people of God. "I have resolved to leave none of your name or nation," was the reply of the stern Barbarian; and it was with difficulty, that he was withheld, by the ca-

to a friend a little after the council in these affecting terms: I pity you, brother—may God look on our misery with the eyes of his mercy. Coimbra is taken, the servants of God are fallen by the edge of the sword. Elipand (one of the bishops of the council) is carried away captive; Lisbon has redeemed itself with gold, groaning, and anguish. You have seen what the Sarrs have done in Gallicia; judge what the Avars are doing in Lusitania. I send you the decrees of the faith you ask for; I will send you all, if I discover the place where you are hidden. I expect the same fate daily. The Lord have mercy on us.

The sympathizing reader, who enjoys at his ease the civil and religious privileges of our country, will do well to consider how thankful he ought to be for blessings, of which these pious men were deprived.

^f Salvian de Gubern. B. 7.

^g Victor Vitens. B. I.

treaties of those about him, from ordering them to be thrown into the sea.

Yet, amidst the decline of Roman greatness, the growth of idolatrous superstition, and the horrors of the times, it is pleasing to see the improvements of human society through the influence of Christianity, corrupted and imperfect as it then was. I have before noticed the extinction of the savage games and sports of the Romans. Of a piece with this was the abolition of the barbarous custom of exposing children, a custom which had continued amidst all the grandeur of Rome. Constantine, in, the year 331, had made a decree to obviate it; so had Honorius in the year 412. Still, however, those who took care of the children were molested. And now in the year 442, in a council held at Vaison,^a it was ordained that on Sunday the deacon shall give notice at the altar, that an exposed child hath been taken up, and that if any will claim it, he may do so within ten days; otherwise that he who shall afterwards claim such a child, shall have the church-censure of Homicide denounced against him.

In the year 445 Genseric passed over into Sicily, and so far as his arms prevailed, extended the persecution of the church into that island.

Germanus, of Auxerre, was called a second time into Great Britain, to assist the church against the Pelagian heresy, which again spread itself there. He set out in the year 446, and baffled the attempts of those who disturbed the faith of the Britons. The authority of this person was exceedingly great in these times, and it must be confessed that he employed it to the best purposes, the propagation of Christian doctrine, and the benefit of human society. But I am inclined neither to credit nor to relate his miracles; and I am sorry that I have little else to tell the reader concerning him. He died in the year 448, having held the See of Auxerre thirty years.

Attila, the Hun, now made terrible ravages in various parts of the empire; yet, such is the ascendancy which religion, supported by any tolerable decorum of manners, must ever maintain over ignorant barbarism, that his respect for it, in some measure, had already checked his progress in Gaul; and an embassy of Leo, bishop of Rome, from the emperor of the West, determined him not to invade Italy. This was in the year 452. Two years after, Genseric, king of the Vandals, arrived at Rome, which he found without defence: Leo went out to meet him, and persuaded him to be content with the pillage, and to abstain from burnings and murders. He returned into Africa with many thousand captives. This circumstance gave occasion

to an exercise of the Christian grace of charity, worthy to have a place in these annals.

After a long vacancy, Deogratias was ordained bishop of Carthage in the year 454; at the desire of Valentinian, the Roman emperor, and as it seems by the connivance at least of Genseric. The captives of the latter were divided among his followers, who separated husbands from wives, and children from parents. The heart of Deogratias was moved with compassion; and, to prevent these disorders, he undertook to redeem the captives by the sale of all the vessels of gold and silver belonging to the churches. As there were no places large enough to contain the multitude,^b he placed them in two great churches, which he furnished with beds and straw, giving order for their daily accommodation with all necessaries. He appointed physicians to attend the sick, and had nourishment distributed to them in his presence by their directions. In the night he visited all the beds, giving himself up to this work, notwithstanding his age and infirmities. He lived only three years in his bishopric, was endeared to the memory of the faithful by his virtues; and while Arians performed military exploits, and dealt in blood, this follower of Augustine honoured the real doctrines of the Gospel by acts of meekness and charity. It is thus that we still trace the real church of Christ, and see the connection of principles and practice in the disciples of the Lamb. The sight of so much goodness was too much for Genseric; he took care to suffer no more such bishops, and, in process of time, the orthodox bishops in Africa were reduced to three.

Several godly persons, after a variety of hardships and tortures, came into the hands of Capsur, a Moorish king, the relation of Genseric. These being arrived at the desert where he lived, and seeing there a number of profane sacrifices, began by their discourse and manner of life to bring over the Barbarians to the knowledge of God, and gained a great multitude in a country, where the name of Jesus had not yet been heard of. Desirous of establishing the Gospel there, they sent deputies, who having crossed the desert, arrived at a Roman city; for some part of Africa still remained connected with the Roman empire. The bishop sent priests and ministers, who built a church, and baptized a great number of Barbarians. The Pagan king informed Genseric of these transactions, who, incensed at the zeal of these pious men, condemned them to death. The converted Moors bewailed themselves; and the martyrs as they passed by, said to each of them, Brother, pray for me; God has accomplished my desire; this is the way to the heavenly kingdom.

Genseric ordered the bishops to deliver up the sacred vessels and books; which they refusing, the Vandals took them by force, and plundered every thing. Valerian, bishop of Abbenza, above four score years of age, was driven alone out of the city, and all persons were prohibited from lodging him in their houses. He lay naked a long time in the public road, exposed to the weather, and thus expired for the faith of Christ.

The Orthodox celebrating Easter in the church of a town called Regia, the Arians assaulted and massacred them. Genseric ordered that none but Arians should serve in his family, or in that of his children. A person, named Armogastus, was in the service of Theodoric, the king's son, who was treated with variety of insults, till death put a period to his sufferings.

Another, named Archimimus, was flattered by Genseric himself, and was promised immense wealth, if he would receive Arianism; but his constancy was invincible, and Genseric having given secret orders to the executioners, that if he shewed undaunted courage at the moment of execution his life should be spared; he by this means was suffered to live.

Satur,¹ steward of Huneric's house, was very free in his censures of Arianism. Being accused, he was threatened with the loss of all his property, and was further told, that his wife should be married to a keeper of camels if he persevered. His wife, who had several children and a sucking infant, intreated him to comply. He answered, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.² Let them do what they will, I must remember the words of the Lord, whoever doth not leave wife, or children, or lands, or houses, cannot be my disciple." They stripped him of all, and reduced him to beggary.

Genseric afterwards ordered the great church of Carthage to be shut up, and banished the ministers; and wherever his arms prevailed, he made the people of God to feel his fury. The whole empire of the West, indeed, was falling into ruin. Odoacer, king of the Heruli, made himself master of Rome in the year 476, and though he was afterwards obliged to give way to the victorious arms of Theodoric the Goth, yet Roman emperors have ceased in Italy ever since.¹ Africa, we have seen, bowed under the yoke of the Vandals; Spain, and a great part of Gaul was held in subjection by the Goths; the other part of Gaul was subjugated by the Franks, who, in process of time, became masters of the whole country, which from them

bears the name of France; and the southern part of Great Britain was overpowered at length by the Saxons. These were idolaters, and the small remains of the ancient Britons, Christians by profession, retired into the inaccessible mountains of Wales. The poverty of the northern parts of the island was their security. And we must be content to leave the fruits of the labours of Germanus, Palladius, and Patrick, in a very low state, till we shall have occasion to speak of the conversion of the Saxons. The Franks also were at present idolaters; the Barbarians, who ruled in the other parts, were Arians, though it does not appear that any of them persecuted the faithful with so much rage, as the Vandals did. Evaric, king of the Goths in Spain, seemed ambitious to tread in the steps of Genseric: he forbade the ordination of bishops in the room of those who were deceased, and sent others into banishment. The churches fell into decay, and congregations seldom assembled. Indeed, it was a very gloomy season with the Western church in general. The wrath of God was evidently poured out on the churches for mercies long abused; but there were those who, by the principles of divine grace, were enabled in patience to possess their souls, and to evidence that the real church was far from being extinguished.

Among the stars that illuminated this disastrous period, was Sidorius of Lyons.² He was of one of the noblest families in Gaul, and was a celebrated orator and poet. About the year 472, he was, contrary to his wishes, appointed bishop of Clermont, in Auvergne. His liberality was highly laudable, and even before he was bishop he did frequently, unknown to his wife, convert his silver plate to the use of the poor. His brother-in-law, Ecdicius, was remarkably distinguished for the same virtue. The Goths having ravaged the country during the scarcity occasioned by a grievous famine, which was added to the national afflictions, Ecdicius collected 4000 of both sexes, whom he lodged in his houses, and nourished during all the time of the scarcity. Patiens, bishop of Lyons, also extended his bounty to the remotest parts of Gaul. The providence of God was remarkable in tempering the miseries of the Christians in these times by raising up such exemplars of munificence. Patiens possessed the pastoral character in a great degree, and reclaimed many of the Burgundian Arians. His virtues were admired by Gondebaud, the Burgundian king, who resided at Lyons.

A council was held in Gaul, from the confused account of which it appears that Semi-

¹ Huneric was the son and successor of Genseric.

² Job ii. 10.

³ I have not thought it worth while to mention particularly the emperors of the West since the death of the great Theodosius, as they are all characters very feeble or obscure, and so way interesting in church-history.

⁴ I dare not, however, rank this man among the ornaments of the church of Christ. I find him constantly with princes and emperors, writing their panegyrics, and absorbed in secular politics. Of his evangelical taste and spirit I know no sufficient evidence.

⁵ Fleury, B. xxix. 56.

Pelagianism was still very prevalent there; nor is it to be wondered at, if we consider the little light of the Scriptures which now remained in the church.

Geneseric dying in the year 477, was succeeded by his eldest son Huneric." He began his reign with a mild aspect toward the faithful, and, after an interval of twenty-four years, permitted them to ordain a bishop of Carthage, but under this condition, that the Arians at Constantinople should have the same liberty, which those of the general church had at Carthage. The people protested against the condition, and with good reason, because the power was out of their hands, and they said, "we will not accept a bishop on such terms. Jesus Christ will govern the church, as he has done hitherto." But Huneric disregarded the protestation; and Eugenius was elected bishop of Carthage.

All mankind soon bore witness to his virtues. The revenues of the church were indeed in the hands of the Arians; but large sums were every day brought to him, all which he faithfully distributed to the needy, and reserved to himself no more than daily bread. The Arian bishops soon murmured; they represented him as a dangerous preacher, and expostulated with Eugenius himself for suffering persons to hear him, who wore the Vandal habit, which was, it seems, at that time, perfectly distinct from the Roman. God's house, he replied, is open to all, without respect of persons.

Huneric, who had only complied thus far with the inclinations of the Roman Christians in his dominions, to oblige the court of Constantinople, where the emperor of the East reigned, began gradually to shew the ferocity of his spirit. Fearing that he should lose his Vandals; if they attended the preaching of Eugenius, he ordered guards to watch at the doors of the church, who, when they saw a man or woman in a Vandal habit, struck such persons on the head with short staffs jagged and indented, which, being twisted into the hair, and drawn back with sudden violence, tore off both the hair and skin. Many suffered extremely by this means; women, who had been thus treated, were led through the streets, with a crier going before to exhibit them to the people. The faithful, however, remained firm; and those who belonged to Huneric's court could not be induced to receive Arianism. He deprived them of their pensions, and sent them to reap corn in the country. As these persons had been educated like gentlemen, the punishment was equally severe and reproachful. But they bore the cross for the sake of him who gave himself for them.

Victor, bishop of Vita, to whom, as an

eye-witness and fellow-sufferer, we are indebted for the history of this memorable persecution, relates some visions which were looked on as preludes of the horrible desolations which approached. We may pass by these without any loss to the reader, and also without any impeachment of the general credibility of the historian. Huneric at first ordered, that none should hold any office who was not an Arian. He afterwards confiscated the possessions of the rejected orthodox, and banished their persons into Sicily and Sardinia. He seized the consecrated virgins, and treated them with excessive cruelty and indecency, with a view to extort evidence from them against the bishops. But nothing could be drawn from them to suit the tyrant's purpose, though many died under the torments.

Huneric afterwards banished pastors and people, to the amount of four thousand nine hundred and seventy-six, into the desert. Felix, of Abbirita, had been bishop forty-four years, and by the palsy had lost his speech, and even his understanding. The faithful, compassionating his case, implored the king, that the old man might be allowed to end his days quietly at Carthage. Huneric, as if he had been ambitious to outstrip the Pagan emperors in persecution, said, "let him be tied to wild oxen, and be so carried, where I ordered;" on which, they tied him across a mule like a piece of timber. These Christian heroes were conducted to the two cities of Sicca and Larja, where the Moors were directed to receive and conduct them into the desert: They were at first confined in a prison, where their brethren were allowed to have access to them, to preach, and to administer the Lord's supper. Some young children were of the number, several of whom were tempted by their mothers, to admit Arian baptism; but out of the mouth of babes and sucklings strength was ordained, and they continued faithful.

The guards were soon after severely chastised for granting these privileges; none were permitted to visit the prisoners; they were thrown one upon another, and, for want of room, could not withdraw, to comply with the necessities of nature. The effect of this was horrible beyond description. Some of their brethren found means to enter unobserved among them, and of these was Victor, our author, who sunk up to the knees in the ordure. How strong was that grace, which caused them patiently to endure, rather than free themselves by unfaithfulness!

The Moors at length ordered them to march. They went out on the Lord's day, their clothes, their beads, and their faces covered all over with filth, and they sang as they went, "such honour have all his saints," Cyprian, bishop of Unisiba, comforted them,

• Victor Vit. B. II.

• Fleury, B. xxx.

and gave them all he had, wishing for the honour of being carried with them. This was not granted him at present. He afterwards was confined, suffered much, and was sent into banishment. There is a voice in man which speaks loudly in favour of suffering innocence. The whole country resounded with the cries and groans of the people flocking to behold them, and throwing their children at their feet. Alas, said they, to whom do you leave us? who shall baptize these children? who shall administer the Lord's supper to us? why are not we permitted to go with you? Among the rest, a woman was observed leading a child by the hand. Run, my boy, said she, observe what haste these holy men make to receive the crown. Being reproved for desiring to go along with them, I am, she replied, the daughter of the late bishop of Zurita, and I am carrying this child, who is my grandson, lest he be left alone, and the enemy draw him into the snares of death. The bishops, with tears in their eyes, could only say, God's will be done. As they travelled, when the aged or the young, who wanted strength, were not able to advance, the Moors pricked them forward with their javelins, or threw stones at them. Such as were not able to walk were tied by the feet, and dragged along. Many died in the march; the rest arrived at the desert, and were fed with barley, nor were even allowed this after a season.

In the year 483, Huneric sent an edict to Eugenius with orders to read it in the church, and dispatched couriers with copies of it through Africa. The purport of the edict was, after upbraiding the faithful bishops for their zeal in spreading their doctrines, to command them all to appear at Carthage, to dispute with the Arian bishops on a certain day, and to prove their faith, if they could, by the Scripture.

The most alarming words were, "resolving not to suffer any scandal in our provinces." The bishops interpreted them to mean, that he would not suffer any who professed the doctrine of the Trinity to remain in his dominions. They therefore drew up a remonstrance, containing in substance a petition, that Huneric would send for the bishops who were beyond the seas. Huneric, regardless of the remonstrance, persecuted the most learned bishops under various pretences. He banished the bishop Donatian, after giving him a hundred and fifty bastinadoes. He treated others also with great cruelty, and forbade any of his sect to eat with the faithful.

On the first of February, the day appointed for the conference, the bishops resorted to Carthage from every part of Africa, and from all the islands subject to the Vandals. Huneric made no mention of the conference for

many days, and separated those of the greatest abilities from the rest, that he might put them to death on false pretences. One of the most learned, named Læstus, he burned alive, with a view of intimidating others. At length, when the conference was opened, the orthodox chose ten of their own number, to answer for the rest. Cirila, the chief of the Arian bishops, was seated on a magnificent throne, with his partisans sitting in an exalted station, while the orthodox continued standing below. The latter saw what a mock conference it was likely to prove, and remonstrated; the Arians ordered one hundred bastinadoes to be given to each of them. May God look down on the violence that is offered us, said Eugenius. Cirila finding them better prepared than he imagined, made use of several cavils to avoid the conference. The orthodox foreseeing this, had prepared a confession⁹ of faith, in which the Trinitarian doctrine is very explicitly declared, and which concludes thus, "this is our faith, supported by the authority of the evangelists and apostles, and founded upon the society of all the general churches through the world, in which, by the grace of God Almighty, we hope to persevere till death."

The Arians, incensed at this confession, reported to the king, that the orthodox had raised a clamour to avoid the conference. The tyrant had taken his measures; orders were sent through the provinces, by virtue of which the churches were all shut in one day, and their revenues given to the Arians. He allowed the orthodox till the first of June in the same year, that is, 484, to consider whether they would merit pardon by a retraction.

Such were the measures made use of to obliterate the doctrines of divine grace in Africa, where they had been so gloriously revived by Augustine. Huneric ordered the bishops to be expelled from Carthage, stripped them of horses and changes of raiment, and forbade, under terrible penalties, any one to give them victuals or lodgings. The bishops remained without the walls of the city, exposed to the weather; and meeting accidentally with the king, they all came to him: "Why, say they, are we treated thus?" He looked with fury, and ordered some horsemen to ride in among them, who wounded many.

Huneric could not but be conscious, that his conduct was no less absurd than iniquitous. He ordered them, on second thoughts, to go to a place called the temple of memory, where they were shewn a paper rolled up, and were required to swear to what was contained in it. Are we like beasts, void of sense and understanding, cried two of them, that we should swear at a venture, without

knowing what is contained in the paper? In the issue, of four hundred and forty-six bishops, who came to the conference, forty-eight died, many of them, probably, through hard usage; forty-six were banished into Corsica, three hundred and two into other places, and most of the rest made their escape.

Among those sent into exile was Vigilius, of Thapsus, a man famous for his writings. To prevent the persecution from being more fierce, he composed a number of treatises under the names of some of the most renowned fathers, as he himself acknowledged with regard to several of them. The celebrated creed, called that of Athanasius, is ascribed to him.² He appears to have meant well; but the artifice was plainly culpable; and partly by his practice, and partly by his example, he has caused much confusion and uncertainty in the works of the fathers. Vigilius himself retired to Constantinople.

Huneric, as if the very soul of Galerius had been assumed by him, pursued his sanguinary designs with vigour. He sent executioners among the laity, who whipped, hanged, and burned alive the faithful. Eugenius, before he left Carthage, had written a strenuous letter to warn his flock: and it must be owned, that many of them gave the noblest proofs of sincerity. Donsysia, while she was scourged, and the blood was streaming from her body, said, "Ministers of the devil, what you now do to confound me with shame, (for they had stripped her naked,) is my glory;" and she exhorted the rest to suffer martyrdom. Looking severely at her son, whom she saw dreading the torture, "Remember, son, said she, that we have been baptized in the name of the Trinity. Let us not lose the garment of salvation, lest the master should say, cast them into outer darkness." The young man upon this suffered death with constancy: and she thanked God with a loud voice, embracing his body. Many suffered with her, strengthened by her exhortations.³

The sufferings of many others were very dreadful; it is even painful to write or read the narratives. A woman called Victoria, with amazing constancy supported her cruel tortures, unmoved also by the intreaties of her husband, who besought her to pity their common children.

Victorian of Adrumetum, was at that time governor of Carthage, under the king. He was the wealthiest man in Africa: to gain him over to Arianism was to gain a prize; and Huneric assured him of his particular

favour, if he would submit to be re-baptized, and renounce the Trinitarian creed. "Tell the king, said he, if there were no other life after this, I would not for a little temporal honour be ungrateful to my God, who hath granted me the grace to believe in him." The king, incensed at an answer truly Christian, tormented him grievously; and thus he slept in Jesus. At Tambaia two brothers continued a whole day, suspended with large stones fastened to their feet. One of them, overcome with the torture, at length desired to recant, and to be taken down. "No, no, said the other, this, brother, is not what we swore to Jesus Christ. I will testify against you, when we come before his awful throne, that we swore by his body and blood, that we would suffer for his sake." He said much more to rouse and encourage him; at length his fellow-sufferer cried out, "Torment as you please, I will follow my brother's example." The executioners were quite fatigued with torturing them by hot irons and hooks, and at length dismissed them, remarking that every one appeared ready to follow the example of the two brothers, and that none was brought over to Arianism. I see still the marks of the true church, patiently suffering for the truth's sake, and victorious in suffering.

At Typasa the secretary of Cirila was ordained bishop by the Arians: the inhabitants seeing this, transported themselves into Spain, as the distance was but small. Some, who could meet with no vessels, remained in Africa. The new bishop laboured by courtesy to win their favour; but they, in contempt of his ministry, assembled themselves in a private house for public worship. Huneric hearing of this, by a message from the bishop, ordered their tongues to be cut out, and their right hands to be cut off in the public market place. He seems to have permitted them to retire to Constantinople, but to have been determined to prevent their open confession of the Trinity. Shall I, in compliance with modern prejudices, throw a veil over the rest, or shall I proceed according to historical veracity?—*IMPERIOSA TRAHIT VERITAS*. A miracle followed, worthy of God, whose majesty had been so daringly insulted, and which must at that time have much strengthened the hearts of the faithful, who needed indeed some peculiar consolations amidst such scenes of horrible persecution. The miracle itself is so well attested, that I see not how it can be more so. The reader shall have both the fact and its proofs. Though their tongues were cut out to the root, they spake as well as before, "and if any doubt, says Victor of Vita, let him go to Constantinople, where he will find a sub-deacon called REPARATUS, one who was thus treated, who speaks plainly, and who has a particular respect shewn him in the palace

² I have wondered why persons, who love not the doctrine of the Trinity, should triumph so much on account of this little circumstance. If the sentiments of the creed be defensible by scripture, the name of Vigilius cannot disgrace them; if they be not, that of Athanasius can do them no honour.

³ Victor, B. v.

of the emperor Zeno, especially by the empress."

Aeneas, of Gaza, a Platonic philosopher, a cautious and prudent person,* was at that time at Constantinople, and writes thus in the conclusion of his dialogue on the resurrection. "I myself saw them, heard them speak, and wondered, that their utterance could be so articulate. I searched for the organ of speech, and not trusting my ears, was resolved to have the proof of the eyes. Causing them to open their mouths, I saw that their tongues were plucked out even by the roots, and was then more surprised, that they could live, than that they could speak." Is this sufficient evidence? Hear more: Procopius, the historian, in his history of the Vandalic war,† says, Huneric ordered the tongues of many to be cut out, who were afterwards seen in the streets of Constantinople when I was there, talking without any impediment, or feeling any inconvenience from what they had suffered. Count Marcellinus, in his *Chronicon*, says, "I have seen some of this company of faithful confessors at Constantinople, who had their tongues cut out, but spake without any imperfection in their utterance." To name only one more witness: the great emperor Justinian, in a constitution published by him for Africa, after it had fallen into his dominion, testifies, that he had beheld the same.‡

Numbers were maimed in various ways. Some lost their hands, some their feet, others their eyes, their noses, or their ears. Dagile, wife of one of the King's cup-bearers, though nobly born and brought up tenderly, was severely scourged and banished into a desert, joyfully forsaking her house, husband, and children.

Seven monks of Capsea having been persuaded to come to Carthage, flattered with fair promises, and the royal favour, shewed, however, THAT THEY HAD ANOTHER SPIRIT in them. Inflexibly firm in the profession of the Trinity, and disappointing the hopes of Huneric, they were martyred by his orders.

The whole clergy of Carthage, after having been almost starved with hunger, were exiled. Elpidiphorus, who had been baptized into the faith of the Trinity, and who had had for his sponsor the deacon Muritta, was more active than others in tormenting the faithful. As they were preparing to stretch Muritta on the rack, the venerable aged person suddenly drew out, from under his robe, the linen with which he had covered

Elpidiphorus at his coming out of the font, and spreading it in the view of the whole company, he said to the apostate, who sat as his judge, "Behold the linen which shall accuse you at the coming of the great Judge, and shall cast you headlong into the lake of brimstone, because you have clothed yourself with cursing, by renouncing the true baptism and the faith." Elpidiphorus was confounded and unable to answer. Two Vandals, who loved the faith, accompanied by their mother, forsook their wealth, and followed the clergy into banishment. Theucarius, an apostate, advised the Arian governors to recall some of the young children, whom he, according to his office, had taught to sing the service of the church, and whom he knew to have the best voices. Messengers were sent to recall twelve, who, weeping and holding the banished clergy by their knees, refused to leave them. They were separated from them by force, and were brought back to Carthage. But neither flatteries nor the bastinado could cure them of their attachment. These, after the persecution was over, were held in high estimation in the church. The Arian bishops went every where armed with swords, accompanied by their clergy. One, named Anthony, distinguished himself by his cruel treatment of Eugenius of Carthage, who was his prisoner, and whose life he in vain attempted to destroy by repeated severities. Another bishop, called Habet Deum, was bound by him hand and foot. Anthony stopping his mouth, poured water on his body. "My brother," said the Arian, unbidding him, you are now a Christian, as well as we: what should hinder you in future, from obeying the will of the king?" While you were stopping my mouth, I made, said the holy confessor, a protestation against your violence, which the angels have written down, and will present to God.

The barbarity was general: persons were stopped on the high ways, and brought to Arian bishops, who re-baptized them, and gave them certificates, to prevent their suffering the same violence again. None were permitted to pass from place to place without these certificates. The Arian clergy went, even in the night time, with armed men into houses, carrying water with them, with which they sprinkled persons in their beds, crying out that they had made them Christians. They put the physician Liberatus and his wife into separate prisons, when somebody informed the latter, that her husband had obeyed the king. "Let me see him," says she, and I will do what is well-pleasing to God." They took her out of the prison to her husband, to whom she said, taking him by the throat, "Unhappy man, unworthy of the grace of God, said she, why will you perish eternally for a transitory glory?"

* Gibbon, (vol. iii. c. xxxviii. Decline of Rom. Emp.) is struck with this evidence, in conjunction with that of the rest. Yet he intimates that the infidel's suspicion is insurmountable. Does he allude to himself? To what purpose does he say so, if he does not? If he does, what is this but to deny all reasonable evidence, and confess himself to be unreasonable?

† B. I. c. viii.

‡ B. I. Cod. de Off. Afr.

Will your gold and silver deliver you from hell-fire?" "What is the matter, wife, he replied; what have they been telling you? I am what I was by the grace of Jesus Christ, and will never renounce the faith."

Cresconius, a presbyter of the city of Myzenta, was found dead in a cavern of mount Zica. Various persons of both sexes fleeing from the persecution, suffered thus through cold and hunger.

At length, after an horrible reign of seven years and ten months, in which time the church was purged by as severe a persecution as any ever known, in the year 485 died the tyrant Huneric of a disease, in which he was corroded by worms,—a signal monument of divine justice! Gontamond, his nephew and successor, stopped the persecution, and recalled Eugenius to Carthage. In the year 487, a council was held at Rome, with Felix, the bishop, at its head," in which were forty bishops of Italy, four of Africa, and seventy-six priests. The rules of penance, prescribed by this synod, on occasion of the late persecution, partook partly of the prevailing superstitions, and partly of the primitive strictness of discipline. Clergymen, who had suffered themselves to be re-baptized, were deprived not only of the ministry, but even of lay-communication, till their death. Other articles breathe the same severe spirit: yet I rejoice, amidst the excess of discipline, to find, that real religion was honoured. One rule of the council deserves to be mentioned for its good sense. 'No clergyman shall receive into his city the penitent of another bishop, without his certificate in writing.'

In the year 493, Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, now complete master of Italy, after he had ruined Odoacer, made a law to restrain all the adherents of the latter from making a will, or disposing of their estates. All Italy was alarmed, and Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, was applied to, that he might intercede with the king. Lawtence, bishop of Milan, joining with him, they went together to Ravenna, where Theodoric resided." Epiphanius obtained favour for all, except some few leaders of the party. Theodoric, who had before honoured and experienced the virtues of Epiphanius, discoursed with him in private, and said, "You see the desolations of Italy; the Burgundians have carried away captive a number of the inhabitants; I wish to redeem them; none of the bishops is so proper as yourself, undertake the embassy; I shall order what money is necessary for you. Epiphanius accepted the commission, on condition that Victor, bishop of Turin, might be his companion. In the year 494, Epiphanius passed the Alps; all the people came out to see him, and brought presents, which he distributed among the poor. Ar-

riving at Lyons, where Gondebaud, the Burgundian king resided, he advised him to dismiss the captives without ransom. It seems astonishing, that one Arian king should negotiate with another of the same sect, by means of a Trinitarian; but it is just to notice these things, that the reader may not suspect all Arians to have had the spirit of Eusebius of Nicomedia, or of Himeric, the Vandal. The true triumphs of real godliness and virtue, in softening the miseries of human society, appear in these transactions of Epiphanius. Let philosophers say, that this was all the effect of superstition: it is my duty to show, that even in a superstitious age, godliness did exist, and did perform what mere superstition could not; and philosophy should stop her mouth, when it is remembered, that she seldom ever did so much good to society, as the Christian religion did, when even discoloured by superstition. To proceed:

Gondebaud, who was no stranger to the character of Epiphanius, restored to him without ransom all the prisoners, except those who were taken armed, they being the property of the captors. Six thousand were sent away without ransom; and Theodoric's money, aided by the liberality of Syagrius, a lady of quality and of good works, and of Avitus, bishop of Vienne, redeemed the rest. Epiphanius travelled to Geneva to obtain the release of the captives there, and was equally successful with Gondegisilas, the brother of Gondebaud. He returned into Italy with troops of redeemed captives, and easily obtained for them from Theodoric the recovery of their lands.

This excellent person was born at Pavia in the year 458. From early life he was devoted to divine services, and, at twenty years of age, was ordained deacon. He was made bishop at the age of twenty-eight, and it must be confessed that he gave himself wholly to the service of God and the good of mankind. He was often successfully employed in public affairs. In the year 474, he had been sent by Nepos, at that time emperor of the West, to Evaric, king of the Visigoths, then residing at Toulouse, though after the Visigoths were ejected from Gaul, they resided in Spain. Epiphanius negotiated a peace with Evaric successfully, but refused an invitation to dine with him, because he was an Arian. In 476, Odoacer making himself master of Italy, Epiphanius, by his intercession, obtained the deliverance of a number of captives; and with no other fund, than the supplies of Providence, he repaired the city of Pavia, which had been pillaged, and rebuilt the churches. When Theodoric entered Italy in 489, Epiphanius came to him to Milan, and was courteously received. He still softened the horrors of war during the contest between Odoacer and Theodoric, and did

good to all, even supporting those who had pillaged his lands. In the year 496 he died, being fifty-eight years of age.

About this time decretals of Gelasius, bishop of Rome, were published: a few of them relating to ordination¹ will deserve to be mentioned. "He, who is taken from a monastic life, may be ordained priest in a year's time; but he must not be illiterate; he, who cannot read, can only be a door-keeper. All laymen that shall be ordained shall have six months probation; and cannot be admitted priests till after eighteen months. Bishops are forbidden to receive, much less to promote, such clergymen as pass from one church to another."

Gelasius² himself seems to have been an ornament to Christianity. He died in the year 496. He composed a treatise against some Romans, who had a desire to re-establish the ancient superstition of the Lupercalia.³ "I forbid, says he, any Christian to practise these superstitions; leave them to heathens. I think it my duty to declare to Christians, that they are fatal. I doubt not but my predecessors solicited the emperors to abolish this abuse; they were not heard, and this ruined the empire."—It appears hence, how slowly and stubbornly the old idolatries departed out of Christendom. The testimony of Gelasius deserves our attention, because his manners were holy. He was incessantly employed in prayer, reading, writing, or business, and in conversation on spiritual things with godly men. Idleness and luxury were equally avoided by him; negligence in a bishop he esteemed dangerous to souls, and his liberality to the poor was unbounded. To all this, it may not be quite insignificant to add, that he composed hymns after the manner of Ambrose.

About the year 496, Clovis, king of the Franks, was baptized, and received into the general church. He himself, perfidious, ambitious, and cruel, was no honour to any religious denomination. But some remarkable circumstances of Providence attended his reception of Christianity; which will therefore deserve a place in these memoirs. The

Franks, or French, were a German nation known long before; who dwelt about the lower Rhine. Having passed this river, they entered into Gaul, under the conduct of Pharamond, their first king, about the year 420. Clodio, Meroveus, Childeric, and Clovis, reigned in succession after him. Like the rest of the barbarous nations, who desolated the lower empire, they still advanced gradually in conquests, and Clovis ruined the Roman power entirely in Gaul. But he had to contend with other barbarous invaders, all of whom, however, he subdued at length, and by much carnage and violence he became the founder of the French monarchy. Wicked as he was, he was fitted to become an useful instrument of Providence, like Henry VIII. of England many ages after. He had married Clotilda, niece of Gondebaud, king of the Burgundians; she was zealous for the doctrine of the Trinity, though both her uncle and the whole nation of the Burgundians professed Arianism. Could her private history be known, it would probably be instructive and edifying. For what else could induce a royal lady, brought up among heretics, and given in marriage to a powerful Pagan, to persevere alone so firmly in the apostolical faith, but the grace of God and the effectual operation of his Spirit, in an age when divine truth had scarce a single patron of great power in Europe?⁴

Having a son by her husband Clovis, she endeavoured to persuade him, to permit the child to be baptized, and earnestly reasoned with him on the vanity of his idols, and preached Christianity to him with much sincerity. Clovis, who, it seems, had great affection for his queen, consented at length to the baptism of the infant; but he died a few days after. "Clovis in a rage declared, I have lost my child, because he has been devoted to your deities; had he been devoted to mine, he would have lived." The pious queen answered, "I thank God, who has thought me worthy to bear a child, whom he has called into his kingdom." She had afterwards another son, who was baptized by the name of Clodomir. On his falling sick, the king said, "Yes, I see he will die like his brother, because he has been baptized in the name of your Christ." The mother prayed for his recovery, and the child was restored to health. Clotilda persevering in her exhortations, Clovis heard them, patient, but still inflexible. It pleased God at length to give him a striking lesson, from which he ought to have learned the true art of happiness. Fighting with the Alemanni, he was upon the point of being entirely defeated. Finding himself in the utmost danger, he lifted up his eyes to heaven with tears, and said, "O Jesus Christ, whom

¹ Fleury, B. xxx. Sec. 34.

² Fleury, B. xxx. 41.

³ Gibbon, in vol. iii. c. xxxvi. Decline, &c. is pleased to accuse Gelasius of absurd prejudice, because he supposed those who were for still preserving the festival of the Lupercalia, to be only nominal Christians. After having told the less learned reader, that this festival was an ancient piece of idolatry, in honour of the idol god Pan, that young men, and even magistrates, ran naked through the streets; that they—modestly forbids me farther to explain the indecencies of the ceremonies; suffice it to say, that the whole was calculated to encourage libidinous vices.—I would ask such a writer, whether those, who were for still preserving this abomination, could be any more than nominal Christians; whether he knows any evil more severely and more constantly condemned in Scripture than idolatry; and, lastly, whether the expression "harmless festival," (it is Gibbon's,) does not fasten on him, who uses it, the charge of impudence, or ignorance of Scripture, or malevolence against the word of God.

⁴ Greg. Tur. 11. hist. c. xxvi.

Clotilda affirms to be the Son of the living God, I implore thy aid. If thou givest me victory, I will believe and be baptized: for I have called upon my own gods in vain." While he was speaking, the Alemanni turned their backs, and began to flee, and at length submitted and craved quarter.

Penetrated with a sense of divine goodness, as many wicked men have been for a time, Clovis submitted to the instructions of Remi, bishop of Rheims, whom the queen sent to teach him. The chief difficulty he started was, that his people would not follow him in his change of religion. This was obviated by the facility, with which they received Remi's lessons. What the lessons were, and what exercises of mind and conscience attended the change, we know not; the external circumstances and forms alone we are informed of, and they are not very instructive. The king himself was baptized at Rheims, and so was his sister, and three thousand of his army. He was at that time the only prince who professed orthodox Christianity. Anastasius the Eastern emperor, favoured heresy; the rest of the European princes were Arians. Thus a woman was employed as the instrument of a change in her husband; it is true the change was only nominal, but it was followed by very signal effects in Europe, namely, by the recovery of the apostolical faith, and no doubt by the happy conversion of many individuals.

In the year 494, Gontamond, the Vandal, still increasing his kindness to the church, opened all the places of public worship, after they had been shut ten years and a half, and, at the desire of Eugenius, recalled all the other bishops. He died in the year 496, and was succeeded by his brother Thrasamond.

And here I finish the general history of the West for this century. Much, both of divine Providence and of divine Grace, appears in it. Superstition had grown gradually in this and the former century. Relicks and various other instruments of the same class, were fast advancing into reputation. The monastic solitudes were strongly calculated to augment these evils: and, in the writings of various pious persons, the unguarded and very injudicious addresses to martyrs, which occur frequently, and which were rather rhetorical flights than real prayers, countenanced exceedingly the growing spirit of apostacy. Every new ceremony, while men were in this frame, strengthened the superstitious spirit, and rendered them less disposed to depend on the Saviour, that is, as the apostle says, TO HOLD THE HEAD,^a in the faith and love of the gospel. Had it

not been for the great and solid revival of the doctrine of grace in this century, the wholesome effects of which continued all along in the West, Christianity itself, humanly speaking, would have been in danger of total extinction. The intelligent reader will admire the providential and gracious goodness of the Lord, in preparing, furnishing, and giving success to the important labours of Augustine in this matter, through which so many in Africa were enabled to glorify their Saviour by faithfulness to death, under a severe persecution. The despised, desolated church, at once overborne by heretics, and by barbarous Pagans, still lived in Italy, Spain, France, and Britain, to the end of the century, when Providence raised up a Clovis to support that, of which he himself, however, knew not the value. We leave the church in Italy and Spain only tolerated, but mildly treated, particularly in the former; in Britain confined to the mountains of Wales and Cornwall, in France ready to rise again into eminence, and in Africa just recovered from a dreadful scourge, in which she had gloriously suffered. The changes of a secular kind, though very great in all this period, and alone moving the hearts of worldly men, could not destroy the church, whose root is not in the world. The patience of the godly was exercised by them, the sins of the church were scourged, and the gospel was communicated to Barbarians. The general current of corrupt doctrine was strongly set in: idolatry was too deeply rooted in men's hearts, to be eradicated from any, except those who were Christians indeed, and we shall, ere long, see it established in the formality of public worship. Nothing, however, had hitherto happened, but what had been predicted. The persecutions of the church,^b the short interval of peace,^c and the desolations of the empire which succeeded,^d had all been revealed to St. John. And it may deserve to be remarked, that even amidst all this degeneracy and decay, whoever chooses to compare Christian emperors or priests with Pagans in similar situations, will find a great superiority of character in the former. The meliorating of the condition of slaves, the abolition of tortures, and of other cruel or obscene customs, the institution of various plans for the relief of the poor, and the general improvement of the order of society, are to be attributed in a great measure to the benevolent influence and operation of the Christian religion.

^a Rev. vi.^b Rev. viii. 1.^c Rev. viii.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EASTERN CHURCH IN THE FIFTH CENTURY.

THE life and transactions of Chrysostom have introduced us into this scene already, and prepared us to expect no very great work of the Spirit of God. The vices, which tarnished the West, were superstition, polemical subtilty, and monasticism. These same vices, meeting with little or no check from the revival, which took place in Africa, and spread a benign influence through the Latin churches, prevailed in the East almost universally, and each of them in a much higher degree; yet here and there, the Spirit of God condescended to move amidst the chaos, and it is our duty to watch and discern his operations.

Araces, who was very old, and who had been appointed bishop of Constantinople in the room of Chrysostom, died in the year 405. In the next year Atticus, who had been a principal agent in the persecution of Chrysostom, succeeded him. He seems a person extremely well adapted to an age and metropolis of formal and decent religion, neither so zealous as to give offence by his animadversions, nor so dissolute as to excite disgust by his immoralities. He understood mankind, had good sense, and though he had little learning,¹ yet he possessed the art of shewing off that little to the best advantage. So exquisite a courtier as he, would naturally gain over large numbers of the discontented; yet there were some, who chose rather to meet for worship in the open fields than to communicate with Atticus. This bishop used to compose sermons which he recited from memory; at length he ventured to preach extempore, but he was not admired from the pulpit.

Atticus was certainly a person of a candid temper and beneficent disposition. It had been the custom to mention with honour the names of former bishops in the church; and, with a view to conciliate the friends of Chrysostom, he took care to have his name mentioned among the rest. He distributed alms to the poor of other churches besides his own, and sent three hundred pieces of gold to Calliopius, a presbyter of Nice, for the use of such poor, as were not common beggars, but persons who were ashamed to beg, and also

for the poor of any other communion besides that of the general church.² Hosgid to Asclepias, bishop of the Novatians, "You are happy, who have for fifty years been employed in the service of the church;" and, on all occasions, he behaved with kindness to these dissenters, and very justly owned their faithfulness to the common cause of Christianity in the days of Constantius and Valens. Were all this liberality of sentiment and practice founded on Christian faith and love, it would doubtless be highly laudable in Atticus: such as he is, in virtues and vices, I have represented his character, and must leave him to that Being to whom judgment belongs. He died in the twenty-first year of his bishopric.

During the reign of Theodosius the younger, the son and successor of Arcadius, the Christians in Persia were persecuted grievously, says Theodoret;³ were kindly protected, and allowed to propagate the gospel there, says Socrates.⁴ Very circumstantial details are given by both writers, perfectly conformable to this opposition of accounts. As both the writers were well informed and credible, I judge, that both accounts may be true in different periods of the reign of Isdegerdes; and the more so, as the Persian Magi might have a great share of the king's confidence at one time, and not at another. And, as the persecution was occasioned by the indiscreet zeal of a Christian, it is most probable, that the favourable period was first in order. According to these views, the series of events seems summarily to have been as follows: Maruthas, bishop of Mesopotamia, acquired the favour of the Persian monarch, and, notwithstanding the fraudulent arts of the Magi, almost persuaded him to be a Christian. But toward the end of his reign, a bishop, called Audas, presuming probably on the royal favour, destroyed one of the temples, where the Persians adored the fire. The action was no less contrary to Christian meekness, than to moral prudence, and deserves to be noticed, as a warning to Christians in all ages, to unite the subtilty of the serpent with the innocence of the dove. Isdegerdes on the complaint of the Magi, who only wanted such an advantage, sent for Audas, and in soft terms complained of the injury, and ordered him to rebuild the temple. Audas refused to comply, and Isdegerdes in a rage ordered all the Christian churches in his dominions to be destroyed. He had not himself any real degree of Christian light, to enable him to make allowances for the misconduct of an individual. Nor did it ever appear more plainly how unequally the church of Christ contends with the world, since the mistake of one person laid the foundation of

¹ It is very possible this expression may be too strong. The authority for it rests with Palladius, p. 93. The panegyric biographer of Chrysostom might easily magnify the courtly connivance of Atticus into positive persecution.

² Socrates contradicts this; he will have it, that Atticus had much learning, piety, and prudence. I doubt not but he was largely possessed of the last quality. The consideration of the taste and spirit of an author, will explain these contradictions. Decency and good sense, not much of zealous godliness, appear to have been predominant in Socrates.

³ Socrates, B. vii. c. 25.

⁴ Theod. B. xi. c. 39.

⁵ B. vii. c. 8.

a cruel persecution of thirty years. Isdegerdes began it; and his son and successor Varmenes, inflamed by the Magi, afflicted the Christians with outrageous barbarity.

The Magi procured orders to be issued out to the chiefs of the Saracens, subjects of Persia, to guard the roads, and to apprehend all Christians, that they might not fly to the Romans. Aspebetes, one of those chiefs, touched with compassion at their distress, on the contrary, assisted them in making their escape. Being accused of this at the court of Persia, he fled with his family to the Romans. He took along with him a number of Arabs, who, together with himself, received Christian baptism, and the real church of Christ probably received an accession from this event.

The afflicted Christians implored the aid of Theodosius, and their intreaties were seconded by the humanity of Atticus, the bishop. In the mean time the Persian king sent to demand that the Christian fugitives should be delivered into his hands. To this the emperor would not consent, and a war was the consequence, in which, so far at least as Christianity is concerned, Theodosius had the advantage. An action of Acacius, bishop of Amida, on the frontiers of Persia, in the course of this war, will deserve more praise than any military exploits whatever. The Romans^a had taken seven thousand prisoners, whom they would not restore, and who were perishing by famine. The Persian king was much vexed at this, but knew not how to relieve them. Acacius touched with the distress of the captives, assembled his clergy, and spake thus to them: "Our God has no need either of dishes or cups; since then our Church has many gold and silver vessels from the liberality of the people, let us, by means of them, free and relieve these captive soldiers." In effect he ordered the vessels to be melted down, paid the ransom of the Persians to the Roman soldiers, gave the captives provisions and necessaries for their journey, and sent them home to their king. This was to conquer in a Christian manner. The king desired personally to make his grateful acknowledgments to the bishop, who was accordingly directed by Theodosius to wait upon the monarch.

Theodosius had a reign of uncommon length, forty-one years, though he died at the age of forty-nine. He was a feeble prince, and held the affairs of government with a remiss and negligent hand. The public, however, was benefited by the vigorous wisdom of his sister Pulcheria, who, though only two years older, maintained, by meekness and discretion, that ascendancy over him, which superior capacity always gives. I have no great matter before me concerning the

real church of Christ at present; and I am not disposed to add one more history, to the many already published, concerning superstitious and marvellous acts, the fame of which now abounded, especially in the East. Let us look then at the court of Constantinople a little, and see if we cannot discern some dim traces at least of the features of the church.

Pulcheria devoted herself to a life of virginity, before she was quite fifteen, and persuaded her two sisters to do the same. At sixteen she took the title of Augusta, and as she had always the prudence to preserve her brother's honour, she governed in his name with much success: for she was the only descendant of the great and first Theodosius, who possessed any eminence of character. She accustomed her brother to pray frequently, to honour the ministers, and to be upon his guard against novelties in religion. He had the honour of completing the destruction of idolatrous temples and worship. The young emperor rose early to sing with his two sisters the praise of God. He had the Scriptures much by heart, and could discourse of them with the bishops, like an aged minister.¹ He took great pains to collect the books of Scripture and their interpreters. His meekness and forgiveness of injuries were exceedingly great. Being once asked why he never punished with death those who had injured him, "would to God," he replied, "I could recall the dead to life." To another asking him of the same thing, he said, "it is an easy thing for a man to die, but it belongs to God alone to recover life when departed." His clemency to criminals seems to have been excessive. In compliance with the customs, he exhibited, but with reluctance, the shows of the circus. In the midst of the exhibitions there was once a dreadful tempest, in consequence of which the emperor ordered the criers to warn the people, that it would be much better to leave the shows, and betake themselves to prayer. The motion was accepted: the emperor sang hymns as an example to the rest, and the whole assembly gave themselves up to devotion.

On occasion of good success in his wars, the news arriving while he was exhibiting shows a second time, he persuaded the people in the same manner to leave their pleasures, and to join in prayer and praise. He made a law to forbid in every city even Jews and Pagans to attend the theatre and the circus on the Lord's day, and on certain festivals. He made laws also to prevent the progress of Judaism, but it ought to be added, that he prohibited the molestation of Jews or of Pagans, so long as they lived peaceably under the government. He reduced the penalty of death against heathenism to banish-

^a Socrates, B. vii. 21.

¹ Socrates, B. vii. 22.

ment and confiscation of goods. Such was Theodosius's zeal, which, if it contributed little to the propagation of vital godliness, was doubtless very efficacious in the promotion of external religion.

But, notwithstanding all the encomiums lavished on this emperor, who appears to have truly feared God in the main, it is evident, that the powers of his mind partook of the childish imbecility of his age. A monk, to whom he had refused a favour, had^m the boldness to excommunicate him. Theodosius was so much affected, that he declared he would not touch a morsel, till the excommunication was removed. Though informed by the bishop of Constantinople, that he must not regard so irregular an excommunication, he could not be easy, till the monk was found and had restored him to communion. In what bondage did conscientious persons then live! but how little reason have those to triumph over them, who live without conscience, and trample under foot the light of the gospel!

Sisinnius succeeded Atticus at Constantinople, by the general desire of the people. He was a man of simple manners, courteous, and exceedingly liberal to the poor, a character much resembling his predecessor.

The virtue of mutual forbearance between the general church and dissenters prevailed beyond doubt at this time; the prudent and moderate characters of the bishops of both parties, as well as the uncommon meekness of the emperor, contributed much to this.^a Could I add to this any clear account of the internal vigorous operations of divine grace, the glory of the Eastern church would have been seldom rivalled: but superstition corroded the vitals of practical religion. One remarkable event, belonging to the reign of Theodosius, deserves, however, to be recorded: a Jewish impostor, in Crete, pretended that he was Moses, and that he had been sent from heaven, to undertake the care of the Cretian Jews, and conduct them over the sea. He preached a whole year in the Island, with a view of inducing them to obey his directions. He exhorted them to leave all their substance, and promised to conduct them through the sea, as on dry land, and bring them into the land of promise. Numbers were so infatuated, as to neglect their business, and leave their possessions to any who chose to seize them. On the day fixed by the impostor, he went before them, and they followed with their wives and little ones. It was a memorable instance of that "blindness" which has happened to Israel

till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," and fulfills the Scripture-account of their penal folly. When he had led them to a promontory, he ordered them to throw themselves into the sea. None of them, it seems, had the caution, to insist on his setting the example. Those who were at the brink of the precipice leaped down, many of whom perished, partly dashed against the rocks, and partly drowned; and many more would have perished, had not a number of fishermen providentially been present, who saved their lives. These, enlightened at length by experience, prohibited the rest from taking the leap. And they all now sought the impostor in order to destroy him: but he had made his escape. Many of the Cretian Jews were on this occasion brought over to the Christian faith.

Two controversies shook the churches of the East in this reign, on which far more has been written than tends to edification. The first was the Nestorian, which was occasioned by the obstinacy of Nestorius, in objecting to a common phrase of the orthodox, namely, "Mary the mother of God." He seems to have regarded the union between the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ rather as moral than real, and to have preferred the idea of a connection between the two natures to an union. As the last century had been remarkable for heresies, raised on the denial of the union of the three Persons in the Trinity, so this was disturbed by heresies, raised on the denial of the union of the divinity and humanity of the Son of God. Cyrol, the bishop of Alexandria, the opposer of Nestorius, seems, on the whole, to have expressed no more than the faith of the primitive church. But the serpentine wits of the East, favoured also by a language of exquisite subtlety and copiousness, found no end in cavilling. Eutyches, the monk, raised a second heresy, which denied the existence of two natures in the person of Jesus Christ. This extreme is opposite to that of Nestorius. How indecently and fiercely these controversies were agitated, how very little of practical godliness was applied to them by any party, and how much the peace of the church was rent, is well known. It belongs only to my purpose, and it is all the good which I can find in general to have resulted from the contests, to mention, that the doctrines of Scripture were stated by the two councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, and by the writings of those who were most esteemed in the church at that time. Such was the provident care of Christ over his church, in the preservation of the fundamental truths relating to his person, and the union of the two natures in it, that all attempts to remove them from the mind by explaining them according to men's own ima-

^a Theodoret, v. 36.

^b Let an instance of this be drawn from the funeral of Paul, bishop of the Novatians, whose corpse was attended to his grave with singing of psalms by Christians of all denominations. The man, for his holiness of life, had been held in universal estimation.

^c Rom. xi.

ginations, were subverted; and the doctrine was transmitted safe to the Church in after ages, as the food and nourishment of humble and self-denying souls. The writings of Leo, bishop of Rome, are deservedly admired for their strength and perspicuity in clearing up this subject.

Theodosius died in the year 460. His sister Pulcheria remaining sole mistress of the Eastern empire, gave herself in marriage, for political reasons, to Marcian, whom she made emperor; nor does it appear that her religious virtues suffered any diminution till her death. Both Marcian and Pulcheria were as eminent for Christian piety as a superstitious age permitted persons of their exalted stations to be; and Marcian, who survived, died at the age of sixty-five, in the year 457, renowned for his services to religion. The preservation of orthodoxy, the encouragement of good morals, and the destruction of idolatry, were his favourite objects.

Of his successor Leo it is remarkable, that he forbade any judiciary proceedings on the Lord's day, or any plays and games. This law bears date 469. At so late a period did the full observance of the most ancient of all divine institutions receive the sanction of human authority! The same year he made a law against Simony, requiring men to be promoted to the episcopal office without their own choice, and declaring those, who are active in their endeavours for the promotion, to be unworthy of the office.

Gennadius, archbishop of Constantinople, died about the year 473. The most remarkable thing I find in him is, that he never ordained any clergymen, who could not repeat the Psalter without book.

But I am disgusted with the prospect. It grows worse in the East to the end of the century. Doctrinal feuds and malignant passions involve the whole. Possibly in the view of some private and obscure scenes in the next chapter, the reader may find something more worthy of his attention.

CHAPTER XIII

CHRISTIAN WRITERS OF THIS CENTURY.

THE great luminary of the fifth century has been copiously reviewed. The greatest praise of some of the rest is, that they illustrated and defended the evangelical views of faith and practice through him revived; yet amidst the gloom of superstition we may discover several rays of godliness, even among persons who had never read the bishop of Hippo.

MARK,^a the hermit, lived about the beginning of this century. He wrote on the spiritual life, and describes the conflicts and labours of men truly serious for eternity. Many of the ascetical or mystic writers are tarnished with Semi-Pelagianism. Mark is in the main an humble advocate for the doctrines of grace, and feels the depravity and helplessness of human nature. He describes views of the spirituality of the law and the grace of the Gospel; and, amidst all his care to promote practical godliness, he protests against the idea of our being justified by our works, as a very dangerous notion. I regret that I can communicate no more of such a man. Even of his country I can find no account, except that he belonged to the Eastern church.

THEOPHILUS, bishop of Alexandria, the unrighteous persecutor of Chrysostom, does not deserve a place in this list on account of his writings, which are futile, and breathe a worldly spirit. But a reflection he made at the hour of his death may merit the attention of political and ambitious dignitaries of the church. "How happy, said he, art thou, Arsenius, to have had always this hour before thine eyes!" which shews, said a writer of that time, that monks who retire from the world to mourn in the wilderness, die more peaceably than bishops, who go out of their dioceses to disturb the peace of the church by caballing at court. It seems, Theophilus had lived, as if he were never to die.

Paulinus, of Nola, if not one of the most learned, was one of the most humble and pious writers of his time. He was born at Bourdeaux about the year 453. He had a classical style and taste, and being of an illustrious family, had advanced to the greatest dignities of the empire. He married Therasia, a rich lady, by whom he obtained a great estate. It pleased God to inspire his wife with the love of heavenly things, and she had great influence in inducing her husband to prefer a retired life before the grandeur of the world. In the prosecution of this scheme, there was as much of genuine piety, and as little of superstition as in any saints of these times. He gradually parted with his wealth, and observed in one of his epistles, that it was to little purpose for a man to give up his worldly wealth, except he denied himself; and that a man might renounce the world heartily, who did not part with all his riches. The people of Barcelona in Spain, where he lived in retirement, conceived so great an esteem for him, that they insisted on his ordination. He writes thus on the occasion to a friend: "On Christmas day, said he, the people obliged me to receive the order of priesthood, against

^a See Genesis ii.

^a See Du Pin, from whom I derive particular information on subjects of this nature.

my will; not that I have any aversion to the office: on the contrary, I could have wished to have begun at the porter's order, and so have gradually risen into the clerical.—I submitted, however, to Christ's yoke, and am now engaged in a ministry beyond my merit and strength.—I can scarce yet comprehend the weight of that dignity; I tremble, when I consider its importance, conscious as I am of my own weakness: but he that giveth wisdom to the simple, and out of the mouths of sucklings perfects praise, is able to accomplish his work in me, to give me his grace, and to make me worthy, whom he called when unworthy."

After this he lived sixteen years at Nola, in privacy, where at length he was ordained bishop in 409. The incursions of the Goths disturbed him for some time, and on this occasion it was that he prayed in the manner that his friend Augustine tells us, that the Lord would not suffer him to be tormented on account of worldly goods, as he had long been weaned from them in his affections. It pleased God, that after the assault of Nola by the Goths was over, he peaceably enjoyed his bishopric till his death in 431.

This holy person was intimately acquainted with Alipius, bishop of Tagasta, whom we have already celebrated as the townsman and friend of Augustine. Through his means he became acquainted with the writings of the bishop of Hippo, which were peculiarly adapted to the taste of one who, like Paulinus, knew what in-dwelling sin means. Hence arose a very peculiar friendship between the two bishops, cemented by their common interest in the privileges and doctrines of the gospel.

His letter to Amantius gives an excellent view of his divinity, which he illustrates both from the Old and New Testament, much after the manner of the bishop of Hippo. In writing to Delphinus, who had been dangerously sick, he speaks of the benefit of afflictions to the righteous, as they exercise their godliness, keep them from pride, and imprint in them the fear of divine justice, which will decidedly confound the ungodly, since it so severely chastizes the righteous.

Paulinus was intimate with Sulpicius Severus, the historian, who was a priest of Agen, a person of noble birth, fine talents, and much superstition; a disciple of Martin of Tours. That he could unite so much ele-

gance of the Rotten language with so much childishness of thought, forms one of those inconsistencies, which abound in human nature. And yet there want not here and there in his history marks of good judgment, and every where a spirit of piety prevails. Paulinus comparing Sulpicius's conversion with his own, prefers that of his friend, "because, said he in one of his letters, he had at once shaken off the yoke of sin, and broken the bands of flesh and blood in the flower of his age; and at a time when he was renewed at the bar, and in the career of worldly honour, he despised human greatness, that he might follow Jesus Christ, and preferred the preaching of fishermen before all the pieces of Ciceronian eloquence."

Severus had desired to have Paulinus's picture. The bishop of Nola refused, and called his request a piece of folly. He takes occasion, however, to give a picture of his own heart. Here is one passage of it, much admired by Augustine. "How should I dare to give you my picture, who am altogether like the earthly man, and by my conduct represent the carnal person? On every side shame oppresses me. I am ashamed to have my picture drawn as I am, and I dare not consent to have it made otherwise. I hate what I am, and I am not what I would wish to be. But what avails it me, wretched man, to have evil and love good, since I am what I hate, and sloth hinders me from endeavouring to do what I love? I find myself at war with myself, and am torn by an intestine conflict. The flesh fights against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. The law of the body opposes the law of the spirit. Wo is me, because I have not taken away the taste of the poisoned tree, by that of the saving cross. The poison communicated to all men from our first parent by his sin, yet abideth in me."

In a letter to Florentius, bishop of Cahon, the reader may, perhaps, find an objection obviated, which might arise from the last article, namely, how can a man, who finds himself so miserable, enjoy any consolation? Jesus Christ, says he, is the rock containing that spring of living water, which we happily find not far from us, when we are very thirsty in this world: this is that which refreshes

• Ep. 86. of Aug.

* This humble and serious language is the obvious effect of a spirit truly conscientious, deeply sensible of the holiness of God, and its own unworthiness. Nor is there any thing in which primitive piety appears to more advantage, when compared to modern religion, than in a review of men's conduct with respect to the pastoral office. In our times it frequently happens, that youths, who have really a religious cast, fancy themselves adequate to the most important of all offices, before they have attained the age of twenty. Parents also too often look on their duller children as competent to the sacred function; and it is much to be feared, that worldly lucre is the spring that animates many to press into the ministry, who never had any charity for their own souls.

• All this is the peculiar language of a Christian, arising from just views of in-dwelling sin in its nature and its constant influence. Paulinus describes from the heart such things as none but a truly enlightened mind can know: for original sin is not known at all, except by experience. I need not say to the evangelized reader, how consonant this language is to that of the best men in the Old Testament, and in the New; and although I omit Pharaoh may be inclined to think it excessive, I will add, that it is even too faint for the occasion; every real Christian knows that no work can so effectually describe the strength of internal corruption. Hence humility, the faith of Christ, the preciousness of the gospel to the mind, and all the true holiness which is exercised under the sun; and uniformly it appears, that men who know the most of native wickedness, are the most holy in their lives and conversations.

us, and prevents us from being consumed by the heat of concupiscence. This is the rock on which the house is founded, that shall never fall. This is the rock, which being opened at the side, cast out water and blood, to make us taste of two wholesome fountains, the water of grace, and the blood of the sacraments, which proves at once both the source and the price of our salvation."

In another letter to Augustine, he discourses on the felicity of the saints after the resurrection. "All their employment shall then be, to praise God everlastingly, and to give him continual thanks."

This holy bishop was the delight of his age. He led a retired and temperate life, but with no great austerity, singularly remarkable for the tenderness of his conscience, the meekness of his spirit, and a constant sense of his own imbecility, and of the need of divine grace.

Isidore, of Pelusium, in Egypt, spent his whole life in the monastic state, and he did honour to a course of life by no means the wisest. He lived in the practice of serious piety, and, by a number of letters which he has left, he appears to have known the world much better, and to have been more useful to the church, and to society, than might have been expected from a monk.

He observes on the Holy Scriptures, that there is a divine wisdom in ordering some things to be very plain, and others obscure, at once to encourage our investigation, and to check our presumption. He gives good rules for the exposition of Scripture, guards against fanciful interpretations of concise expressions, where the connection has not been considered, and teaches us not to attempt to draw the mysteries of the gospel from every passage of the Old Testament. He agrees with the orthodox in the great doctrines of the gospel; his views of divine grace are sound in the main, but escape not the taint of Semi-Pelagianism, which seems to have prevailed over the Eastern church: the doctrine of the African luminary never making any great progress among the Greek churches.

His conduct, on occasion of the Nestorian controversy, was admirable. He endeavoured to heal the ferocious spirits of the disputants, and condemned the tempers of those, whose doctrines he yet admitted to be sound.

The great excellence of this writer is his practical rules. For a specimen, take his advice to a physician who lived wickedly. "You profess a science requiring much wisdom; but you act inconsistently: you cure small wounds for others, and heal not your own distempers, which are great and dangerous. Begin at home."

Cassian was a monk from his childhood, and spent the latter part of his life at Mar-sailles. He has been before mentioned as the father of Semi-Pelagianism. His plau-

sible views of moderation led him into inextricable confusion. He allows that grace is necessary even for the beginning of faith. Yet he affirms that man can naturally choose good, but needs grace to accomplish it. He thinks that sometimes grace, and sometimes the will of man is the first mover. The cases of St. Paul and St. Matthew seem to him to illustrate the first position; those of Zacheus and the penitent thief the second. In such endless jargon is a sensible man involved, while he vainly mixes opposites, and forgets the Scripture-declaration, "if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." Yet his system has since been adopted by many of the more decent sort of Christian professors, and will, whatever may be said, recommend itself to all of them, who are unacquainted with the entire depravity of human nature. In him Semi-Pelagianism found a very powerful guardian, because his learning and morals were unquestionably respectable. And it happens in this case, that a system which discovers its absurdity and extreme inconsistency to every man endued with any real degree of self-knowledge, exhibits a most plausible appearance in theory, and seems to shun the opposite rocks of self-righteousness and Antinomianism. So it pretends: "but wisdom is justified of her children."

Coelestine, bishop of Rome, has already been noticed as supporting Prosper and Hilary, disciples of Augustine in Gaul, against the intrusions of Semi-Pelagianism. He reprov'd those French bishops, who favoured the doctrines of Cassian, and he published some articles concerning grace, of which a summary has already been given. The earnestness of his manner shews, that he felt what he said; and his testimony to the bishop of Hippo will deserve to be recorded. "We have always had Augustine, of blessed memory, in our communion, whose life and merit is well known; his fame hath been

* Cassian wrote monastic rules and institutions, in which he teaches "for doctrines the commandments of men." He instructs the poor monks in the duties of implicit submission, and of voluntary humility, by which their understanding would rather be enervated than any true mortification of sin acquired. Is nothing does the system of Augustine triumph more sensibly over that of Cassian than in this point of view. I conceive these two men both engaged in the design of leading men to an holy life. With superstition they both were infected. But in Cassian the fashionable evil prevails, reduces itself into a system, and leads the devoted into a tedious number of artificial externals, with an intention to break the human will, and force it into something like virtue. What, for instance, can be more absurd than his directions to the young probationer to subject himself absolutely to the will of his superior in the convent? to submit to orders in a manner impossible to be executed, to endure hardships and crosses without any reason but the arbitrary will of a master? Follies which, in the papacy, have continued for ages after. But see Augustine. His system leads him to stem the torrent of superstition; to attempt, at least, to emancipate Christians from the yoke of bondage; to teach true, not fictitious, internal, not merely external humility; to lead the soul to Christ, to instruct men in love, to enforce Christian practice from spiritual motives; in fine, to aim at purity of heart, and heavenly-mindedness.

unblemished, and his knowledge is so indisputable, that my predecessors have looked upon him as one of the most excellent teachers of the church. All orthodox Christians have ever thought well of him; and he hath been generally revered through the whole world.—The church of Rome, though at this time much degenerated from primitive purity, must not, however, be deemed Anti-Christian, while the real doctrines of Christ were supported in it. And though secular ambition was gradually making its way among her bishops, yet some of them were real good men and faithful pastors, and I am willing to believe, that Celestine was of the number.

See the zeal and uprightness of this bishop in the subject of episcopal ordination. A person, named Daniel, who had come from the East, retired into France. The monastery where he lived accused him of scandalous crimes. Yet he had the address to get himself ordained a bishop in that country. Celestine, in vain, had endeavoured to prevent this. He blames the bishop who had ordained him, and declares, that he had lost the episcopal dignity himself by ordaining one so unworthy. It does not appear that he fulminated a decree of excommunication against him. The superior dignity of the bishop of Rome in the Western world was hitherto rather founded on the opulence of the See, and the civil importance of the city of Rome, than on any positive claims of dominion. Celestine's conduct was more like that of a Christian bishop than of a Pope. He found fault with the conduct of the hierarchy in France, in raising at once to the episcopal office laymen who had not gone through the several gradations of the priesthood. He ^W DECREES, that when a bishop is to be chosen, the clergy of the same church, whose characters are known, and who have deserved well, be preferred to strange and unknown clergymen; that a bishop be not imposed on any people against their consent, but that the votes and agreement of the clergy, people, and magistrates be followed; that no clergyman be chosen out of another diocese, when there is any one in the same church fit to be ordained bishop.

The same soundness of judgment which led Celestine to oppose interested ordinations and the undue interference of secular ambition, induced him also to oppose the democratic spirit, as appears from his letter to the bishops of Calabria and Apulia, whom he forbids to ordain laymen bishops on the demand of the people. "When this de-

mand is against the rules of the church, it should never be complied with."

The three contemporary Greek historians, who continued ecclesiastical history, where Eusebius ended, through the fourth and part of the fifth century, are Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret of Cyrus. I have made use of them all along, and find them particularly serviceable, where I have not the much more satisfactory lights of the fathers themselves, whose transactions are recorded. The first is doubtless a judicious writer, remarkable for his candour to the Novatians, and of a generous peaceable temper. Neither he nor Sozomen furnish us with sufficient documents, from which a decisive judgment of their own personal characters may be formed. The latter is less judicious, and very fond of monks. The third, however, surpasses all men in admiration of monastic institutions, and is credulous beyond measure in subjects of that nature. Yet was he himself one of the most learned and best men in the Eastern church. His pacific conduct displeased the bigots during the noise of the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies. It is evident, that his own views were orthodox; but because he inclined to healing methods, he was condemned at one of the synods, and was not without difficulty reinstated. Hear him speak in his letter to Leo of Rome, which will give us an epitome of his character and story. "I have been a bishop these twenty-six years without reproach. I have brought over to the church above a thousand Marcionites, and many Arians. There is not now an heretic in the eight hundred parishes of my diocese. Often have I been assailed with stones, and have sustained combats with Pagans and Jews.—Reject not, I beseech you, my humble prayer, nor despise my old age, loaded with disgrace, after so many labours. God is my witness, that I am not concerned for my own honour, but on account of the scandal given, and lest several of the ignorant, and particularly of the converted heretics, should look on me as heretical, seeing the authority of those who have condemned me; and without considering that for so many years of my episcopacy, I have neither acquired house, nor land, nor money, but have embraced a voluntary poverty."

He was born at Antioch, in the year 386, and ordained bishop of Cyrus, a city of Syria, by the bishop of Antioch, about the year 420. The inhabitants spake chiefly the Syriac tongue; few of them understood Greek, and heathenish ignorance prevailed among them. The most shining part of Theodoret's character appeared in his pastoral employments. He laboured, and suffered for the love of Christ, and was often

^v Fleury, B. xxiv. 56.

^w I use reluctantly the word Decree, because for some time the admonitions of the bishop of Rome had gone by the name of decretals; though certainly, as yet bishops out of Italy at least were not under his jurisdiction. However, the imperative style of the Roman Bishops at this time is indefensible, and intimates the too great growth of their power.

in danger of his life from the rage of the multitude. But God gave success to his endeavours in the manner stated above, and he found, what persevering pastors often find, the love of his people to attend him at his latter end. He resided constantly in his diocese, and no doubt was signally useful in it by preaching and by example. When called, which was but seldom, by the superior bishop or patriarch of Antioch to attend his synod, he went, and preached on those occasions at Antioch, in a manner that left a deep impression. All the time he was bishop he had no suits at law with any man, nor did he or his clergy ever appear at the judgment-seats. His liberality was unbounded, and in every part of Christian morals he appears to have exhibited that peculiar spirit, which none but true Christians are able to do.

The authority of Leo, bishop of Rome, was of service to him in the persecution before spoken of; and he died peaceably in his bishopric; though calumny and prejudice after his death prevailed so far as to procure his condemnation in the time of Justinian. His works are large on a variety of subjects; but they speak not for him equally with his life; and it will be sufficient to say, that his theology, with a stronger mixture of superstition, was of the same kind as that of Chrysostom. But his spirit was humble, heavenly, charitable; and he seems to have walked in the faith, hope, and love of the gospel, a shining ornament in a dark age and country.

Leo, bishop of Rome, was one of the greatest men of his time. In secular affairs his successful negotiations have already been noticed. In the church it must be owned, that he took much pains concerning matters of discipline, that so far as appears from circumstances he supported the cause of truth and uprightness in general, though with a constant attention to the amplification of the Roman See. Antichrist was not yet risen to its stature; but was growing apace. He attempted to extend his influence in France, but met with a firm resistance. The celibacy of the clergy was more strictly enforced by him than by any bishop of Rome before. Yet, in Christian doctrine he was not only evangelical in general, but also in a very elaborate and perspicuous manner, so as to evince the pains he had taken to understand the Scriptures. His letter to the Eastern churches on the divine and human nature of Christ, is allowed to have been remarkably scriptural. He opposed Pelagianism with much zeal; he detected the evasions of its defenders, who made grace the effect of human merits; and he resolved every thing into the grace of God in so full and clear a manner, that if his own heart was influenced by the sentiments which he

espoused, he must have been an humble holy Christian: but his piety was certainly not so unquestionable as his capacity and accuracy of sentiment. Candour, however, will rather incline to impute what is suspicious in his conduct to the times than to his disposition. Leo justly reprov'd the great and scandalous violations of order and decorum in the African ordinations of bishops, which preceded the invasion of Genseric. And he has left us several decrees, from which the reader may collect what were the ancient ideas of pastoral and ecclesiastical discipline.

"What, says this prelate, can be the meaning of laying hands suddenly on any man; but to confer priests' orders on persons of whose worth we are ignorant,—before we have had time to try them, before they have approved themselves competent by their industry, and have given some tokens of knowledge and experience?"

He is of opinion, that pastors should have passed through all the inferior orders, and have exercised them for some time, before they be appointed bishops.

He declares, that those who have not been chosen by the clergy, nor desired by the people, nor ordained by the bishops of the province, with the consent of the Metropolitan, may not be accounted bishops.

"He ought to be chosen bishop, who is chosen by the clergy and people. In case their judgment be divided, the Metropolitan should prefer him who is of greatest worth, and hath most votes. But no man should be appointed bishop, whom the people refuse."

"He, who would go from one church to another, out of contempt of his own, shall be deprived both of that which he hath, and of that which he would have, that he may neither preside over those whom, through avarice, he hath desired, nor those whom, through pride, he hath despised."

Bishop Leo himself preached and fed his flock at Rome; and a number of his sermons are yet extant. Nor was the faith of the church concerning the union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ neglected in the course of his ministry. This was still the prevailing doctrine, notwithstanding the subtle and manifold opposition made to it. Leo himself was one of the ablest instruments of its vindication; and whether it is probable that he was so only in a speculative manner, let the reader judge from the following passage of his ninth sermon on the nativity. "For unless faith believe, that both substances were united in one person, language explains it not; and therefore matter for divine praise never fails, because the abilities of him who praises never suffice. Let us rejoice then, that we are unequal to speak of so great a mys-

tery of our mercy; and when we are not able to draw forth the depth of our salvation, let us feel that it is good for us to be vanquished in our researches. For no man more approaches to the knowledge of the truth, than he who understands, that in divine things, though he makes much proficiency, something always remains for him to investigate."

Hilary, bishop of Arles,⁷ was the successor of Honoratus in that See. The latter was Abbot of the monastery of Lerins,⁸ an isle of France, famous in these days for its monks. He took pains to draw Hilary into serious Christianity, which, in these times, was too much connected with the monastic life. Honoratus himself was afterwards chosen bishop of Arles, and his disciple Hilary was unanimously elected to succeed him. Hilary has left us the life of Honoratus; in which he vindicates the custom of writing encomiums on deceased holy men. He says, with an happy inconsistency, for he must be considered as a Semi-Pelagian, "God is praised in his saints, as all their worth and excellency ought to be imputed to the Author of Grace." An excellent sentiment and truly Christian! let it only be firmly and consistently maintained, and let it influence the heart. Men then must be humble, the grace of Christ must engage their whole dependence; and they, who hold in sentiment the doctrines of Cassian, will only be found to be illogically defective in their arguments, not unsound in their practical views. However, the fashionable prevalency of the sentiments of Cassian in France, and the plausible support which they received from several highly respected characters, besides Hilary of Arles, would no doubt have a pernicious effect on the minds of the next generation.

No fault can be found with Hilary's writing the life of a saint. The manner of his doing it, unhappily by no means singular, is only to be blamed. With him Honoratus is all excellency, and looks more like an angel than a man. Suffice it just to mention the circumstances of his exit. He fell into a languishing distemper, which yet hindered him not from executing his priestly office. He preached in the church in the year 429, but his disease increasing, he died a few days after. Hilary bears witness to the piety of his last hours, having been present with him.

The life of Hilary himself is written, it is supposed, by Honoratus, bishop of Mar-seilles, with the same partial exaggerations.

⁷ This is not the Hilary, who, in conjunction with Prosper, supported in France the doctrine of Augustine, concerning grace. His sentiments approach more to Semi-Pelagianism; yet he deserves a place in these memoirs, because he held, implicitly at least, the fundamentals of divine truth, was truly humble and pious; and evidenced to all men, that he was a sincere member of the church of Christ.

⁸ Now called St. Honorat, or Honore de Lerin.

Yet some circumstances are mentioned, which bear strong marks of credibility. He often admonished in private the governor of the city, whose conduct had been very faulty, and seeing him one day come into the church with his guards, he brake off in the midst of his discourse, and said, that those, who disregarded private admonitions, were unworthy of public. It is recorded, to the praise of this bishop, that, though he knew how to address the most polished auditory, and occasionally shewed great literary powers, he could, however, adapt himself in the plainest manner to the apprehensions of the vulgar: a rare but precious talent of a preacher, and surely more dependant on the heart than the head. The labours of this holy person were very great, and in preaching he was so zealous, that he was obliged to check himself by a sign agreed on, lest he should carry his discourse to too great a length. Prosper candidly allows, that his life and death was holy. Leo, of Rome, who had an unhappy quarrel with him in his life-time, spoke honourably of him after his death. I have only to regret that I have it not in my power to gratify the reader with more particulars of the labours and works of so pious a man, and so zealous a preacher.

Vincentius, of the same monastery of Lerins, was likewise renowned for his piety. He left behind him a treatise on the marks of heresy. With him, besides the testimony of Scripture, universality and antiquity are added as essential and concurring requisites of the evidence of orthodoxy: and though Popery can by no means stand the test of these, (for it had not as yet properly existed in the church,) it has notwithstanding staled itself of his rules, and pressed them into her service.

Eucherius, of Lyons, is another of the same stamp, and his excellent life and death are attested by Prosper.

Prosper, of Riez, in Aquitain, was a layman who distinguished himself in this century in the defence of the doctrines of grace. He largely extracted from Augustine's works the fundamentals of his positions; and wrote with much earnestness a defence of them. He was engaged in a labour'd controversy with the Semi-Pelagians in France; but controversy, managed with a spirit like his, serious, candid, and argumentative, not abusive and censorious; and conversant on topics of real importance, is an advantage, not a detriment to the cause of true religion. He bears a cheerful testimony to the solid piety of several of his opponents in France, as we have seen already, and appears only zealous for divine truths, and not for any particular party. It was an advantage to the truth revived by Augustine, that under the cautious and judicious management of Prosper, it was cleared of objections and explained, and re-

ced from aspersions, without losing any thing of its sterling purity. Of Prosper himself I can say nothing; except that his writings speak for his piety, humility, and integrity. Suffice it to give two or three quotations,* one of which obviates the most specious objections that have been made to the statements of Augustine. "Setting aside that distinction which the divine knowledge confines within the secret of eternal justice, we ought most sincerely to believe and profess, that God would have all men to be saved; since the Apostle, whose sentence this is, most earnestly directs, what in all churches is most purely observed, that prayer be made to God for all men, whence, that many perish, is the desert of those who perish; that many are saved, is the gift of the Saviour."^b

"Let human debility, says he, acknowledge itself, and the condemned succession of all generations in the first man; and when the dead are quickened, the blind illuminated, the ungodly justified, let them confess Jesus Christ their life, and light, and righteousness."

"We act with liberty, but with liberty redeemed, over which God is the governor."

"Grace does more than persuade and teach by kind advice and exhortation; it changes also the mind within, and forms it anew, and from a broken vessel makes it new in the energy of creation. This, not the admonitions of the law, not the words of a prophet, not nature so studiously preferred to her, performs. He only who made, renews. An Apostle may run through the world, preach, exhort, plant, water, rebuke, and be urgent; but that the hearer may benefit by these means, neither the scholar, nor the teacher, GRACE alone, effects.—This orders the seed of faith to take root in the mind, this keeps and cherishes the harvest to maturity.—It is God who raises the dead, frees the prisoners, pours understanding into dark hearts, and infuses love, by which we love him again; and the love which he infuses is himself."

Once more; hear his vigorous testimony to the entire depravity of nature, from a practical sense of which, he was, I doubt not, led to see the suitableness of his views of grace to the exigencies of fallen humanity.

"The mind, which originally had light from the supreme Light, involves the will in darkness, and leaving the light, chooses to grow black in earthly darkness, nor can it voluntarily lift up its captive eyes on high; because, by the robbery of the tyrant, it hath

even lost the knowledge of the greatness of the wound under which it lies prostrate.

Primasius was an African bishop, who for some years attended the ministry of Augustine, whose views he followed, as appears from his writings, particularly his comments on St. Paul's epistles. But though he seems conversant in the writings of Augustine and Jerom, he is not a mere copyist, but discovers an original vein of thought, and appears to have been well furnished with polite learning. He says, "Faith is the gift of God, and is infused by the secret inspiration of grace, not by human labour, nor by nature, but by the Holy Spirit." He vehemently opposes self-righteous sentiments, and defends with much accuracy the genuine doctrines of the Gospel. It is surprising, that of so able a writer we should have no account with respect to his life and transactions.^c

Timotheus Ælurus, bishop of Alexandria, wrote nothing worthy of a distinct memorial. I mention him only, as an instance of the unhappy state of that once flourishing Christian city. It had a succession of turbulent ambitious bishops: the bad effect on the inhabitants was but too fully evidenced by their conduct: they had murdered his predecessor, and the way which he took to fix himself in his See, was by flattering them in their vices. I scarce remember any thing good of Alexandria in all this century. It seems to have been precipitating itself into the darkness of Mahometanism, which God was preparing for it as a scourge for its dreadful abuse of the light of the gospel.

Salvian, priest of Marseilles, was an eloquent, neat, and beautiful writer. His manner is very serious, and he presses the necessity of good works, and particularly of almsgiving with great vehemence. He excels in vindicating the judgments of God on the wicked nominal Christians of his time; but of his acquaintance with real Christianity, from the small account I have seen of him, I find no evidence.

Honoratus, bishop of Marseilles, is celebrated as a great extempore preacher; his ministry was much attended by clergy and people, and he was desired often to preach in other churches. Gelasius, bishop of Rome, had an high esteem for him. These accounts may seem simple and mean; but much evidence arises from them, that true religion had some prevalence in France in this century. Much preaching and much controversy on matters of evangelical importance, though attended with evils, prove that Christ is there by his Spirit.

Faustus, bishop of Ries, was an Englishman, and was first a monk of the monastery of Lerins, of which he was chosen abbot. After the death of Maximus, bishop of Ries,

* Pro. Aug. doct.

^b The attentive reader has seen this to be the sentiment of the anonymous author of the *Calling of the Gentiles*. Perhaps no two propositions are more certainly and decisively scriptural than those two of Prosper. It is the vain attempt to clear them of a supposed inconsistency, which has confounded many reasoners. The church of England has exactly hit this medium in all her public writings. To know where to stop is wisdom indeed.

he was chosen his successor. He composed several treatises, governed his diocese unblamably, led an holy life, and died regretted and esteemed by the church. Though, in the controversy which has so much called for our attention in this century, he favoured the Semi-Pelagians, he seems to have done so rather through fear of the abuses of predestination, and a misunderstanding of the consequences of Augustine's doctrine, than through the want of piety and humility. For he composed a treatise concerning saving grace, in which he shewed, that the grace of God always allures, precedes, and assists the human will, and that all the reward of our labour, is the gift of God. A priest, named Lucidus, was very tenacious of the sentiments of Augustine, and was opposed at least by the greatest part of the French bishops in his neighbourhood. Faustus endeavoured to correct his ideas by suggesting, that we must not separate grace and human industry; that we must abhor Pelagius, and detest those who believe, that a man may be in the number of the elect, without labouring for salvation. He adds many other cautionary maxims of the same kind, to which no sober and judicious follower of Augustine will object; and treats Lucidus with much gentleness and candour. Hence I wonder not that the presbyter was induced, at the council which was called, to assent to all that was required of him.

On the whole, after a careful review of the lights of antiquity on this subject, it appears to me, that there were a number of serious and pious persons on both sides of the question in France; that the controversy was carried on with a degree at least of moderation; that men, who really feared God, and lived by faith on his Son in practical humility, differed rather in words than in things, while they debated on this difficult subject; that yet the views of Augustine are scriptural, and most consistent, and would in all ages be allowed so to be, if men had a sufficient degree of patient attention to distinguish his positions from the abuses which may be made of them; that the Semi-Pelagian notions have, however, been held by men, whose experience was contradictory to their sentiments, men truly pious and holy; but, that the danger of these notions (as all errors in subjects relating to grace must be dangerous) lies in the bad use, which persons, unacquainted with the operations of the Holy Spirit, will be sure to make of them. France was at this time divided between the two parties; but as ignorance of true religion in-

creased, Augustine's views of grace grew less and less fashionable, and were confined to particular situations, while wickedness flourished.

I add only, that profaneness has no right to triumph on account of these controversies. Their existence, and the serious and charitable manner of conducting them shewed, that real godliness was alive in that country, nor is it probable, that there was, in any part of the world, at that time, more genuine piety than in France. When men are silent on topics of divine grace, when they gladly listen to the sneers of secular writers, who affect to treat all the controversialists with equal contempt, and are content to think so superficially on religion, as to live without any determinate sentiments on the doctrines of Scripture, then is the time when wickedness will reign without a check; and when what is called philosophy will domineer. God hath left such a people, for the present at least, to their own imaginations.

Victor, of Vita, of whose affecting history of the African persecutions, I have made much use; and who himself suffered for righteousness sake, will deserve to be added to this list.

Of Gelasius, bishop of Rome, no more need to be added to what has been said, than that he wrote zealously against Pelagianism.

Julian Pomerius, a priest in France about the end of this century, deserves attention for his practical works. A few sentences, descriptive of the characters of good and bad bishops and preachers, will shew the taste of the times, as well as afford some sentiments not uninteresting to the pastors of this day.

"A wicked bishop seeks after preferment and riches; chiefly aims to gratify his passions, to confirm his authority, and to enrich himself. He avoids the laborious and humbling part of his office, and delights in the pleasant and the honourable." He applies to such men's consideration the views of the 34th chapter of Ezekiel. "A good bishop converts sinners to God by his preaching and example—lastly, he holds himself fast to God only, in whom alone he puts his trust."

The difference between a good and bad preacher he thus lays down: "The one seeks the glory of Jesus Christ by explaining doctrines in familiar discourse. The other uses the utmost strength of his eloquence to gain reputation. The latter handles trifles with elaborate language; the former elevates a plain discourse by the weight of his thoughts."

CENTURY VI.

CHAPTER I.

THE LIFE OF FULGENTIUS, AND THE STATE OF
THE AFRICAN CHURCHES IN HIS TIME.

IN the year 496, a storm began again to lower over the African Churches. Thrasamond, whose reign then commenced, as obstinate in Arianism as Huneric, but more sagacious and less bloody, mingled the arts of gentleness and severity against them. On the one hand he strove to gain over the orthodox by lucrative motives, on the other he forbade the ordination of bishops in the vacant Churches.* But Eugenius, whose faithfulness had been so severely tried in the former persecution, was called to sleep in Jesus before the commencement of this. The African bishops showed however that divine grace had not forsaken them. They determined unanimously not to obey an order, which threatened the extinction of orthodoxy. They ordained bishops, and filled the vacant Sees, though they foresaw the probability of Thrasamond's resentment. But they thought it their duty to take care of their flocks at this hazard, rather than to seem to consent to the king's unrighteous prohibitions. Thrasamond enraged, determined to banish them all. Fulgentius was just at that time chosen bishop of Ruspæ. In him we behold another instance of the effects of the religion revived under Augustine. Fulgentius's life is written by some one of his disciples, and dedicated to Felician, a bishop, who was the successor of Fulgentius. The review of it, and of his own works, will give us a specimen of the power of divine grace victoriously struggling under all the disadvantages of monastic superstition, and the childish ignorance of a barbarous age. Fulgentius was descended from a noble family in Carthage, where his father was a senator. His grandfather Gordon, flying from the arms of Huneric, retired into Italy. After his decease, two of his sons, returning into Africa, now settled under the Vandal government, found their family-mansion possessed by the Arian clergy. By royal authority however they received part of their patrimony, and retired to Constantinople. In that part of the world, at Tellepte, Fulgentius was born, being the son of Claudius, one of the brothers, and of Mariana, a Christian lady, who, being soon left a widow, gave her son a very liberal e-

ducation, for which Constantinople afforded at that time peculiar advantages; and thus his mind became stored with Greek and Roman learning. As he increased in religious seriousness, he inclined more and more to a monastic life, for which he gradually prepared himself by successive austerities in Africa, the country of his father, to which he returned with his mother. He was received into the monastery of Faustus, a bishop whom the Arian persecution had banished from his diocese to a place contiguous to it, where he erected his monastery. The spirit and fashion of the times so transported him, that, at first, he refused even to see his own mother who came to visit him, though he afterwards behaved to her with the greatest filial duty. He underwent severe bodily sufferings from the renewal of the Arian persecution. He was beaten with clubs so cruelly, that he confessed afterwards he scarce found himself capable of enduring the pain any longer, and was glad to induce his tormentors by some conversation to allow an interval to his afflictions. For he seems to have been of a weak and delicate constitution, and the softness of his early education rendered him unfit to bear much hardship. His mind, however, appears to have been serene and faithful to his Saviour, whom, in real humility and sincerity, though tarnished with the fashionable superstition, he served according to the fundamentals of the gospel. The Arian bishop of Carthage, who had known Fulgentius, and esteemed his character, highly disapproved of this treatment, which he had received from a presbyter of his own religion and diocese, and told the injured youth, that, if he would make a formal complaint before him, he would avenge his cause. Many advising him to do so, "It is not lawful, says Fulgentius, for a Christian to seek revenge. The Lord knows how to defend his servants. Should the presbyter through me be punished, I shall lose the reward of my patience with God, and the more so, as it would give an occasion of stumbling to the weak; to see an Arian punished by a Monk." By and by he retired into the more interior parts of Africa. Some time after he sailed to Syracuse, and then visited Rome, and saw there king Theodoric in the midst of a magnificent assembly. If men in this life, seeking vanity, attain such dignity, what will be the glory of saints who seek true honour in the new Jerusalem?—this was the reflection.—Ruspæ in Africa was the place to which

* See Flcury, B. XXX. Vol. III.

Fulgentius, much against his will, was at length elected bishop: but this exaltation lessened not the severity of his way of life; and by the Arian persecution he was banished into Sardinia, in company with other faithful witnesses of orthodoxy. Upwards of sixty bishops were with him in exile. Thrasamond sent more still into Sardinia, in 520, exerted himself mightily in overcoming the constancy of the orthodox, and delighted to ensnare them with captious questions. Fulgentius was sent for by him to Carthage, and by his skill in argument, and his readiness in answering questions, excited the king's admiration—till through the advice of his Arian clergy, who looked on the presence of Fulgentius as dangerous at Carthage, he was remanded to Sardinia. Soon after, Hilderic, the successor of Thrasamond, in the year 523, favouring the orthodox, put a total end to the persecution, and Ruspæ once more beheld her bishop.

He lived among his flock from this time to his death, eminent in piety, humility, and charity. For near seventy days he suffered extreme pains in his last sickness—"Lord, give patience here and rest hereafter," was his constant prayer—and he died at length, as he had lived, an edifying example of every Christian virtue. I feel almost ashamed to have written so barren a life of a man undoubtedly excellent in godliness. But the reader must be content, as well as myself, with the poverty of materials. In an age of learning and genius, the life of Fulgentius would have shown abundantly. In his treatise to Morinus on predestination, he observes,^a "The internal master, from whom we have received the supply of celestial doctrine, not only opens to us, inquiring the secrets of his words, but does also himself inspire the grace to make inquiry. For we cannot so much as hunger after the bread which comes down from heaven, unless an appetite be given to persons before fastidious by him, who deigns also to give himself to satisfy the hungry. From him it is, that thirsting we run to the fountain, who affords to us himself, that we may drink." He afterwards expresses himself with great energy "on the internal and sweeter doctrine of divine inspiration, where truth speaks the sweeter, as it is the more secret." I shall not expect of any man, but one who is truly taught of God, to give a candid interpretation of this. "I pray to be taught many more things which I do not know, by him, from whom I have received the little which I do know. I beg by his preventing and following grace to be instructed," &c. In what follows he shows how seriously he had made the sentiments of Augustine his own, in discussing points exceedingly intricate, with that author's modesty and

dexterity, and particularly in resolving all sin into pride.^d

In a subject so arduous as Predestination, it is very easy, to push men into difficulties. Our author observes^e that some Frenchmen had objected to Augustine, that he had described men as predestinated not only to judgment but also to sin: on which account the learned and holy Prosper defended the sentiments of the African prelate, whose death prevented any answer from himself. Prosper says, the unbelief of men is not generated from predestination; for God is the author of good, not of evil. Infidelity is not to be referred to the divine constitution, but only to the divine prescience.

With equal dexterity he defends the faith of the Trinity, in a book addressed to the king Thrasamond. Let it suffice to mention one argument for the divinity of the Holy Ghost, toward the close. "If he can quicken who is not God; if he can sanctify who is not God; if he can dwell in believers who is not God; if he can give grace who is not God, then the Holy Ghost may be denied to be God. If any creature can do those things, which are spoken of the Holy Ghost, then let the Holy Ghost be called a creature." In a treatise on the Incarnation and Grace of Jesus Christ, he answers the trite objection against divine election drawn from the words, "God would have all men to be saved," by showing that upon the views of those who see no mystery in the subject, but resolve the distinction into the merits or demerits of men, Almighty God ceases to be incomprehensible, as the scripture describes him to be. He allows the great truth, that God would have all men to be saved, and yet that there is a depth not to be fathomed by man in the destruction of so many sinners. Much more might be quoted from this author, on subjects essentially connected with the gospel of Christ. But the diffusiveness of the quotations from Augustine may supersede the necessity of enlarging on the views of one, who so closely followed his steps, and who wrote and lived with a similar spirit.

Besides several doctrinal treatises, we have also a few epistles of this saint. The fourth to Proba, concerning prayer, deserves to be carefully studied. It is an excellent sample of the humble piety of the African school. He instructs the lady in his favourite doctrine of grace connected with humility, and justly infers, that if a man as yet innocent could not remain so by his natural power, much less can this be expected from him now that he is in a state of so great depravity. He describes, in a pathetic manner, the snares arising from the craft of Satan, and the corrupt workings of the heart, declaring that though the Lord from time to time attend

with aids during the sharp war, lest his people faint, yet our mortal nature is suffered to be overloaded with the burden of corruption, that we may feel our helplessness, and have speedy recourse to divine grace. He describes the conflict between flesh and spirit, shows that it must last through life, that prayer and watching are ever necessary, and that a conceit of our perfection would lead us into deadly pride. He recommends an humble contrite frame of spirit, not only for the beginning, but for the whole course of a Christian's progress, and concludes with a beautiful view of the perfect rest from sin which remains for him hereafter. It is refreshing to the mind, to see the real principles of Christianity appearing in great vigour and clearness in this little composition.

The epistle to Egyptius^a is full of charity, and describes this greatest of Christian graces in a manner much resembling that of Augustine. In an epistle to Theodorus a senator,^b he congratulates him on his victory over the world. He had been, it seems, a Roman consul, and had given up secular pursuits through the love of heavenly things. Fulgentius strongly reminds him to whose grace alone he was indebted for the change, and recommends humility,^c "a virtue which neither those have who love the world, nor those who profess to have renounced the world by their own strength." By which distribution of the unconverted into two sorts he points out the same division of men, which has ever taken place from the time of Christ. Pharisees and Sadducees were their names among the Jews; in the gentile world the terms Stoics and Epicurians give the same distinction. In the school of Augustine, lovers of the world, and men proudly boasting in their own strength, pointed out the difference, which we now commonly mark by the terms worldly minded and self-righteous; while in all ages the genuine religion of real humility stands contradistinguished from both. Fulgentius recommends to this nobleman the constant study of the Scriptures. "If you come to them meek and humble, there you will find preventing grace, by which, when fallen, you may rise; accompanying grace, by which you may run the way of rectitude; and following grace, by which you may reach the heavenly kingdom."

In the epistle to Venerius, concerning Repentance,^d he steers in the middle course be-

tween perspiration and despatch, invites all men of every age to repent and be converted, under the confident expectation of acceptance with God through Jesus Christ, and mentions our Lord's parable of the different hours in which labourers are brought into the vineyard, as an argument, that no time is fixed to debate the returning sinner. Nor would Jesus have come to save the lost in this last age of the world, if human wickedness was ever too strong for divine mercy and goodness. He observes, that the great defect of Judas in his repentance lay in this, that he had no faith in that blood which he had betrayed. He quotes pertinent scriptures, and, to comprehend in one nervous sentence the whole subject, he says, "A salutary conversion is two-fold; it is when repentance leaves not him who hopes in the divine favour, nor hope deserts the penitent: and it is evidenced by this, if a man with his whole heart renounce his sin, and with his whole heart place his hope of forgiveness in God. For sometimes the devil takes away hope from the penitent, sometimes repentance from him who hopes. In the first case he overwhelms the man whom he burdens, in the second he throws down him whom he sets at ease."—Hear his testimony to the mystery of the gospel. "The only begotten God so loved human nature, that he not only freed it from the power of the devil, but also placed it at the right hand of the Father in himself above all good angels."

In his epistle concerning the baptism of a dying negro, who had given previous proofs of sincerity, while he was a catechumen, but in the time of baptism itself was senseless and incapable of professing his faith; he endeavours to obviate the doubts of those who were afraid lest his incompetency should prevent his salvation. There are two points observable in this epistle, one is the custom of the Church in presenting infants to baptism, the other is, that however rapid the progress of superstition had been in the time of Fulgentius, yet the most destructive superstitions, and those which are directly subversive of Christian faith and piety, both in doctrine and practice, were as yet unknown. He assigns as a reason for not baptizing the dead, that sins are irremissible after the separation of the soul from the body. He supports his opinion with the declaration of the Apostle, that we must be judged of the things done in the body. Nothing can be more conclusive against the pernicious doctrine of purgatory.

I observe farther that he uses the word "to justify" in the same sense in which Augustine does; nor does the true idea of the word seem to be recovered by the Christian world till the days of Luther.^e

^a Ep. 5. ^b Ep. 6.
^c The practice of Fulgentius agrees with his doctrine. About the end of the year 500, a bishop in an African council disputed precedence with him.—The council decided for Fulgentius, who for that time acquired in the authority of the council. But, observing how much the other was assisted at the determination, in a future council he publicly desired that it might be reversed. His humility was admired, and his request was granted.
^d Ep. 7.

He speaks of the evils of the Pelagian heresy, and describes the strength and ability given to Augustine against it, and strongly recommends the writings of that father to the Christian world, as containing a more copious instruction of divine grace, than had been known some time before, though the doctrine itself, he contends, had ever been held in the Church.*

CHAPTER II.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH IN OTHER PARTS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, TILL THE DEATH OF JUSTIN, INCLUDING THE LIFE OF CÆSARIUS.

IN the beginning of this century, Alaric king of the Visigoths reigned at Toulouse, and was sovereign of a kingdom on the confines of France and Spain, though afterwards, by the victorious arms of the Franks, the Visigoths were confined to the latter country. Most of his subjects were of the general Church, and he himself was an Arian; yet he treated them with great humanity, and gave leave to the bishops of his kingdom to meet together at the city of Adga. Twenty-four bishops assembled, the president of whom was Cæsarius, bishop of Arles. They made a number of canons, relating to discipline and church externals, two or three particulars of which may be mentioned. "All clergymen who serve the church faithfully shall receive salaries proportionable to their services." This rule, so simple and general, was the ancient provision for the maintenance of pastors. But, by another canon of this council, clergymen are allowed, provided they have the bishop's leave, to reserve to themselves the revenues of the Church,^a saving its rights, but without the power of giving away or alienating any part; and here is the origin of benefices. "In all churches the creed shall be explained to the competents" on the same day, a week before Easter. All such laymen as shall not receive the communion three times a year, at the three great festivals,^b shall be looked on as heathens. Oratories may be allowed in the country to those who live at a great distance from the parish churches, for the ease and convenience of their families; but they must appear at their parish churches on certain solemn festivals." This last rule showed at once a regard for parochial order, and for the instruction of the people.^c The next is equally laudable:

* Ibid. B. II. C. XVIII.

^a Fleury, B. XXXI. l. Vol. IV.

^b Who seem to have been those who applied for baptism.

^c Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide.

^d The union of these two in just proportion gives a perfect idea of good discipline. It would be well if simi-

"Lay-men are ordered to remain in the church till the blessing is pronounced." Cæsarius was very zealous against the abuses meant to be rectified by this canon. He observed one day some persons going out of the church to avoid hearing the sermon, "What are you about, my children?" cried he, with a loud voice, where are you going? Stay, stay, for the good of your souls. At the day of judgment it will be too late to exhort you." This just and charitable zeal prevailed at length; but he was often obliged to cause the church-doors to be shut, after the gospel was read, to prevent the impious practice. His people were however reclaimed, and they repented by degrees. There are still extant two of his sermons on this subject. Mankind in all ages are apt to be weary of God's word; there were however pastors in the western church, who served for charity, and not for lucre. Another canon will deserve to be mentioned. It forbade auguries, and divinations, and the opening of the scriptures with a view to make an omen of the first words that offered. We have seen that Augustine had opposed this last mentioned superstition. Here it was forbidden under penalty of excommunication. Yet it still prevailed. I see the African school virtuously, but unsuccessfully, struggling against the increasing darkness and superstition.

Cæsarius himself had spent some part of his youth in the famous monastery of Lerins.^d Hearing afterwards that he was actually designed to be made bishop of Arles, he hid himself among the tombs. But he was taken out thence, at the age of thirty, was appointed bishop, and continued in that church above forty years. He was fond of singing, and as he found the laity were apt to talk in the Church, while the clergy were singing, he induced the laity to join with them in psalmody; and in a sermon still extant, he exhorts them to sing with their hearts, as well as their voices. In another sermon he exhorts them to throw off all distracting thoughts, before they prostrate themselves for prayer. "Whoever, says he, in his prayers, thinks on a public place of resort, or the house he is building, workshops that place or that house." He directs them also not to be content with hearing the Scriptures read in the church, but to read them also at home.

This holy man gave himself entirely to reading and preaching. He preached on all Sundays and holidays. If he was himself hindered from preaching, he caused his own sermons or those of Augustine, whom he highly revered, or those of Ambrose, to be read by other ministers. His style was plain,

lar care were taken for many places in our own country, far distant from parish churches.

^d This little island, which we have had repeated occasion to mention, is now called St Honorat, is close to the French coast, and lies between Nice and Toulon.

and adapted to common capacities. He entered into practical particulars, searched the consciences of his hearers, and severely re-proved idolatrous and superstitious usages.

He was once, by calumny, ejected from his Church; but Alaric, his sovereign, on the discovery of his innocence, restored him. He was exposed to similar sufferings afterwards; but was again delivered, and amidst the confusions of the times distinguished himself exceedingly by acts of mercy. He died in the year 542, universally lamented.

In the mean time the cause of Arianism was gradually declining, partly by the progress of the Franks, and partly by the influence of Sigismund, king of Burgundy, who succeeded his father Gondebaud, having been brought over to orthodoxy by Avitus, bishop of Vienne, a year before.

Sigismund, king of the Burgundians, having been induced to put to death his son Sigeric by the calumny of his second wife, and finding afterwards his error, repeated in great bitterness, and besought God to punish him in this life and not in the next. His prayer seems to have been heard; for, in the year 523, he was attacked by Clodomir, king of the Franks, the successor of Clovis, and was afterwards slain with his wife and children. Clodomir himself was soon after slain in Burgundy, and his three sons were brought up by Clotilda, the widow of Clovis, their grandmother.

Such was the state of the Church of Christ in France during the former part of this century. In Italy, some degree of genuine piety may be presumed to have still existed, though I have no interesting particulars to record. If we turn our eyes to the East, the prospect is far more disagreeable. Factions and feuds, heretical perversions and scandalous enormities fill up the scene. Under the emperor Justin, Christianity began at length to wear a more agreeable aspect in some respects, and peace and good order, in external things at least, were in a measure restored. In the year 522 Zammaxes, king of the Lazi, a people who inhabited the country anciently called Colchis, being dead, his son Zathes repaired to Constantinople, telling the emperor that he was desirous of receiving the gospel, and of relinquishing the idolatry of his ancestors. They had been vassals to the king of Persia, and had been obliged to perform sacrifices after the Persian mode. He put himself therefore under the protection of Justin, and desired to receive the crown from his hands. Justin granted his requests, and thus the Lazi became vassals to the Eastern empire, and embraced Christianity. The Iberians also, who bordered on their territories, and were also subjects to the king of Persia, had already received the gospel. How far any thing of the real spirit of Christ's religion was imbibed by either nation, I know

not. I can only say, the limits of the Christian name were extended in the East.*

In Arabia Felix[†] there were many Christians subject to a king[‡] called Dounouas, a Jew, who caused those who were unwilling to become Jews to be cast into pits full of fire. In the year 522 he besieged Negra, a town inhabited by Christians. Having persuaded them to surrender on articles, he broke his oath, burnt the pastors, and beheaded the laymen, and carried all the youth into captivity. Here then the real church of Christ may be traced by sufferings voluntarily undergone for his sake. The next year Elestaban, king of Abyssinia, a country which, as we have formerly seen, had been Christian since the days of Athanasius, supported by the emperor Justin, invaded the territories of the Arabian Jew, subdued his country, and slew him. Thus the Arabian Christians were relieved. Elestaban himself was very zealous, and gave this proof of his zeal, that he resigned his crown to embrace the monastic life.

CHAPTER III.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH DURING THE REIGN OF JUSTINIAN.

ON the death of Justin, his nephew Justinian succeeded at Constantinople in the year 527. He was then forty-five years old, and reigned thirty-nine. I scarce know any prince, whose real and ostensible character were so different. If one judge by external things, he may appear one of the wisest, the most pious, and the most prosperous of men. He re-united Africa and Italy to the Roman empire; he is to this day famous for his code of laws; he was temperate and abstemious in private life, and was incessantly employed in religious acts and ceremonies: he honoured monks and persons reputed holy, built sumptuous churches, endowed monasteries, was liberal beyond measure in the support of the externals of religion, was incessant in the encouragement of orthodoxy, at least of that which to him appeared to be so; indefatigable through the course of a long life in public affairs; seems scarce to have ever unbended himself in any recreations, spent much time in religious speculations, rooted out idolatry from its obscure corners, and brought over

* Fleury, XXXI. 59.

† Id. 60.

‡ Bruce, in his Travels into Abyssinia, toward the latter end of the 1st Vol. calls this king Phineas, who, he says, threw Christians into pits of fire, particularly a preacher Hawaryat, signifying the Evangelical, with ninety of his companions. The king of Abyssinia, who fought against the Jew, he calls Caleb. History, as extracted from Abyssinian and Arabian annals, is the same; and their correspondence, in this instance, with the Greek history, gives some testimony to the authenticity of the materials of Bruce's Abyssinian history.

a number of barbarous kings and nations to the profession of Christianity. What a character, if his heart had been right! His understanding and capacity indeed have been called in question; but I think unjustly. No weak man could have done half of what he did. He must have been a person of superior talents, and of very vigorous and strong faculties. But so far as appears from his conduct, he was altogether, in religion, the slave of superstition, in morality the slave of avarice. For gold he sold his whole empire to those who governed the provinces, to the collectors of tributes, and to those who are wont to frame plots against men under any pretences. He encouraged the vilest characters in their detestable and infamous calumnies, in order to partake of their gains. He did also innumerable pious actions, says Evagrius,* and such as are well pleasing to God, provided the deers perform them with such goods as are their own property, and offer their pure actions, as a sacrifice, to God. In this emperor then it may be seen more eminently what a poor thing the body of Christian religion is without the spirit. Whatever benefit the church might, in some cases, derive from his administration, particularly in what relates to the extension of its pale, this is to be ascribed to the adorable providence of God bringing good out of evil. On the other hand the evil he wrought was palpable. Dissensions and schisms, forced conversions attended with cruelties, which alienated men's minds still more from godliness, the increase of superstition and formality, the miserable declension of real internal godliness,—especially through the East, where his influence was most extensive,—and the increase of ignorance and practical wickedness, were the undoubted consequences of Justinian's schemes.

In truth this man attempted too much: he pressed uniformity of doctrine through the world by imperial measures and arms; he laboured to bring all nations into a nominal attachment to Christianity: he prescribed what bishops and laity should believe, and was himself, in effect, the pope as well as the emperor of the Roman world; yet, wretched being! he himself seems not to have known any one thing in religion in a right manner. In external things he could not but sometimes be right; in internal religion it was hardly possible he should be so; for he was ignorant of his own heart, while his eyes and ears with insatiable curiosity were intent on all persons and objects. It will not be pertinent to the design of this history to enter into a detail of the actions of such a prince; but the view of his character, which I think

is supported by the concurrent testimony of civil and ecclesiastical historians, may teach persons of eminence, either in power, or learning, or genius, who shall give their minds to religious objects, to be in the first place more concerned for their own genuine conversion, and for personal godliness; and then to contract and limit their plans within the humble circle that belongs to a fallible, confined, and short-lived creature like man; and steadily to move within that circle in the propagation and support of the gospel of Christ, and of whatever is virtuous and praiseworthy, without being seduced by regal and dazzling schemes to attempt what is vastly above their reach; for by this method they may be the victims of their own ambition or avarice, while they think they serve God, and may fill the world with evil, while they vainly suppose they are its benefactors. But these are ideas with which the profane and the careless governor has no right to meddle; Justinian was neither the one nor the other. He was serious through life, though void of humility, faith and charity; and for serious spirits, the caution, which his character is calculated to give, will stand as instructive lesson.

In his first year he made laws relating to bishops: a few words of them will deserve to have a place in this history. "The absence of bishops, says he, is the reason that divine service is so negligently performed; that the affairs of the churches are not so well taken care of, and that the ecclesiastical revenues are employed in the expenses of their journeys, and of their residences in this city, (he means the metropolis of Constantinople) with the clergy and domestics who accompany them.—Let no bishops quit their churches to come to this city, without an order from us, whatever may happen.—If we find their presence to be necessary here, we will send for them." What motives induced bishops to attend the courts so much, is easy to guess; and we have here a plain description how much the Eastern church was secularized, and how it gradually ripened into a fitness for desolating judgments.

Justinian says further, "When an episcopal see becomes vacant, the inhabitants of the city shall declare in favour of three persons, whose faith and manners shall be testified by witnesses, that the most worthy may be chosen." He proceeds to lay down rules to restrain the avarice of bishops; rules,

* Ch. XXX. B. IV. Evagrius Scholasticus. His ecclesiastical history takes us up, just after we are deserted by Sozomen, Sozomen, and Theodoret, the tripartite historians of the same period: and in future I must make some use of him, though in historical merit far inferior to the three former.

* Nothing shews in a stronger light the emptiness of his mind than his boasting after he had finished the magnificent church of St. Sophia, "I have excelled thee, Solomon." Yet was this vain emperor made use of by Divine Providence as a shield to support external Christianity at least in the world. In his time Chosroes king of Persia persecuted the Christians in his dominions with extreme cruelty, and publicly declared, that he would wage war not only with Justinian, but also with the God of the Christians. The military measures and the religious zeal of Justinian however checked the progress of his ferocity.

† Fleury, B. XXXII. 10.

which had no existence in purer times, becomes a purer spirit prevailed.

In the year 529, a council, memorable for its evangelical spirit, was held at Orange in France: Cæsarius was its head. He had, as I observed, tasted the doctrine of Augustine concerning grace, and was therefore zealous for its propagation. We may reasonably suppose the articles of this council to have been framed in opposition to the attempts in favour of Semi-Pelagianism made in France, as well as to give testimony to the grace of the gospel. Thirteen bishops were present; and we have a pleasing spectacle of the work of the Divine Spirit flourishing in a considerable degree in France, particularly in the parts about Orange, and in the vicinity of the Rhone. "Adam's sin," says the council, "did not only hurt the body, but the soul; it descended to his posterity; the grace of God is not given to them who call upon him, but that grace is the cause that men do call upon him: the being cleansed from sin, and the beginning of our faith, is not owing to ourselves, but to grace. We are not able by our own natural strength to do or think any thing which may conduce to our salvation. We believe that Abel, Noah, Abraham, and the other fathers, have not had that faith by nature that St. Paul commendeth in them, but by grace." To clear the Almighty of being the author of sin, they add however, "that some may be predestinated to evil, we not only disbelieve, but detect those who think so."

These words express in substance the sentiments of these holy men. But to enable the reader to judge for himself what they were more precisely, I shall give him two passages from the fifth and seventh canons, translated at length from the Latin original. "If any one say, that the beginning or increase of faith, and the very affection of belief is in us, not by the gift of grace, that is, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit correcting our will from infidelity to faith, from impiety to piety; but, by nature, he is proved an enemy to the doctrine of the Apostles." "If any man affirm, that he can, by the vigour of nature, think any thing good which pertains to the salvation of eternal life as he ought, or choose, or consent to the saving, that is to evangelical, preaching, without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all the sweet relish in consenting to and believing the truth, he is deceived by an heretical spirit."

I have been solicitous to preserve faithfulness to the original in this short abstract. Doubtless the sweet relish they speak of is no other than that ineffable delight in the perception and obedience of the gospel, which characterizes the godly in all ages, subjects them, though unjustly, to the charge of

enthusiasm, and produces real practical Christianity. In every effusion of the Spirit of God it always appears in rich exuberance, and is as distinct from formal or even merely theoretical views of religion, as the substance is from the shadow. I look on it as a remarkable fact, that so plain a testimony to vital religion should be given in the South of France in the sixth century, when the Christian world was everywhere so much sunk in darkness. It seems, that in this part of France at least, Semi-Pelagianism had been checked: indeed, as several espousers of it were real good men, it is not to be wondered at, that by farther experience and attention they might be led to embrace in system what in their own sensations they must have known to be true, namely, that man, by nature, is lost and helpless in sin, and that grace alone can revive him. Cæsarius, of Arles, was, in all probability, highly instrumental in producing this change of sentiment; for we should recollect, that Hilary, of Arles, had been a Semi-Pelagian. I should rejoice to be able to gratify the spiritual reader with the account of the lives, labours, and works of these thirteen bishops of France, which were probably useful and edifying. But my records say no more; and this is one of the thousand cases in which I have to regret how little of real church history has been written, how much of ecclesiastical perversions and abuses.

In the same year a council was held also at Vaison,^a at which were present twelve bishops, of whom Cæsarius was one. They decreed, according to the customs observed in Italy, that all country priests should receive into their houses young men, who might be readers in the church, that they should educate them with a paternal regard, causing them to learn the Psalms, to read the Scriptures, and to be acquainted with the word of God; and in this way should provide themselves with worthy successors.^b For the convenience of the people, the pastors were allowed to preach not only in the cities, but in all the country parishes.

About this time the monastic rules of Benedict were established, which afterwards were received through the western churches. They are full of forms, and breathe little of the spirit of godliness. The very best thing that I can find recorded of the superstitious founder, is the zeal with which he opposed idolatry. In that part of Italy, where the Samnites dwelt formerly, the worship of Apollo had been still continued, which he eradicated, and the peasants were by him instructed in Christianity.

^a Fleury, B. XXXII. 12.

^b This is quite consonant to the ancient method of educating men for the pastoral offices, and supplied the want of ecclesiastical seminaries. While so much attention was paid to education and the word of God, there is reason to believe that the doctrines of the Gospel must have been taught with some success in France.

^c See Fleury, B. XXXII. 12.

In a council held at Clermont,^o in the year 535, I see canonical methods were still used to prevent the interference of secular power in the appointment of bishops. "To correct the abuse of obtaining bishoprics by the favour of princes, it is decreed, that he who is a candidate for a bishopric shall be ordained by the election of the clergy and citizens, and the consent of the metropolitan, without making use of the protection of persons in power. Otherwise the candidate shall be deprived of the communion of the church, which he is desirous of governing."

Hilderic, king of the Vandals in Africa, having been deposed by Glimmer, Justinian, by his renowned general Belisarius, recovered the country from the barbarians, and reunited it to the empire. This put an end to the dominion of Arianism in that region. The orthodox were reinstated; two hundred and seventeen bishops held a council at Carthage; Arians and Donatists were forbidden to hold assemblies, and the lands which had been taken from the Arians were restored by an edict of Justinian in the year 535. The face of true religion was recovered in this country; its spirit I cannot find. The best symptom was the extension of Christianity among the Moors, by the zealous care of Justinian. How far any cordial change took place among them does not appear.

In the year 536, Belisarius, the hero of this age, took Rome from the Goths, though some time elapsed after this event before the Gothic power was annihilated in Italy. But what has this our history to do with his triumphs? His master showed much zeal for religion, though ill directed; and, what is worse, not principled with the genuine fear of God. The general scarce seemed to profess any religion at all; and the most remarkable ecclesiastical transaction in which he was concerned is sufficient to brand his name with eternal infamy. A very brief view of it shall suffice.⁴ Theodora, the empress, gave an order to Vigilius, deacon of the Roman church, to require Belisarius to secure his election to the bishopric of Rome, and the expulsion of Silverus, at that time bishop. Vigilius was in that case to present Belisarius with two hundred pounds of gold. The venal General executed the order on the infamous conditions, and delivered Silverus into the hands of Vigilius, who sent him into the island of Palmaria, where he died of hunger.⁵ It was worth while just to mention this villany, that, if any persons have been seduced into an admiration of the character of Belisarius on account of his mili-

tary prowess, they may see how much splendour of false virtue may exist in a man who is altogether void of the fear of God.

Justinian, though at first he seemed to take some pains to correct the consequences of this scandalous transaction of his wife, of his General, and of the unprincipled bishop of Rome, suffered at length the whole scheme to stand. Still he persisted to meddle in religious controversies, and issued an edict for the condemnation of Origen's errors.

In the year 542, a council held at Orleans ordered, that if any person desired to have a parish church erected on his estate,⁶ he should first be obliged to endow it, and to find an incumbent. Hence the origin of patronages.

In the year 555 died Vigilius, bishop of Rome, after having governed eighteen years in the see, which he had so iniquitously obtained. Selfish duplicity marked his character more eminently than that of any Roman bishop before him. But he paid dear for his intrigues and dissimulation. Justinian, who had the ambition of acting as an infallible judge of controversies himself, suffered not Vigilius to be the pope of the church. On the contrary, a little before his death, he was, though very reluctant, compelled by the emperor to consent to the decrees of a council held at Constantinople; which, by the influence of Justinian, condemned the writings called the Three Chapters; that is, three books, or passages of books, one of which was the work of the pious Theodoret of Cyrus. The controversy itself was idle and frivolous; yet, how many pages of church-history, so called, does it fill! But I can find no vestige of piety in the whole transaction. "Therefore eternal silence be its doom."

Several western bishops, because they refused to condemn the three chapters, were banished by the order of Justinian. What advantage was it to the church, that Italy and Africa were recovered to nominal orthodoxy, and to the Roman empire, when she was thus oppressed by her pretended protector!

Justinian, in his old age, fell into the notion, that the body of Jesus Christ was incorruptible. Having once formed the sentiment, he drew up an edict, and, in his usual manner, required his subjects to embrace it. Eutychius, bishop of Constantinople, had the honesty to refuse the publication of it. "This, said he, is not the doctrine of the Apostles. It would follow from thence, that the incarnation was only in fancy. How could an incorruptible body have been nourished by the milk of its mother? How was it possible for it, when on the cross, to be pierced by the nails, or the lance? It cannot be called incorruptible in any other sense,

⁴ Fleury, B. XXXII. 44.

⁵ Fleury, B. XXXII. 57.

⁶ So Liberatus in Breviar; but Procopius, a living witness, says, that he was murdered at the instigation of Antonina, the wife of Belisarius, by Eugenia, a woman devoted to her.

⁶ Fleury, B. XXXIII. 15.

than as it was always unpolluted with any sinful defilement, and was not corrupted in the grave."

But the imperial mandate was stronger than the arguments of the bishop, however reasonable. He was roughly treated, was banished from his see, and he died in exile; he acted however uprightly, and seems from his integrity to have been a Christian indeed. Anastasius, bishop of Antioch, resisted also with much firmness: he was a person of exemplary piety, whom Justinian in vain endeavoured to gain over to his sentiments. As he knew the emperor intended to banish him, he wrote a farewell discourse to his people. He took pains to confirm the minds of men in just ideas of the human nature of Christ, and daily recited in the church that saying of the Apostle: "If any man preach to you any other Gospel than that which ye have received, let him be accursed."^a The example of a truly holy and upright person supporting a just cause is very prevalent. Most around him were induced to imitate. An opinion, directly subversive of the real sufferings of Christ, on which the efficacy of his atonement depends, appeared altogether unchristian. But God had provided some better thing for us, says Evagrius. While the old imperial pope was dictating the sentence of banishment against Anastasius and other prelates, he was seized with the stroke of death. Let not profane persons exult over him; but let those who exercise their thoughts on religion, take care to study the written word with humility, prayer, and pious reverence, warned by the apostacy of a man, who for many years had studied divinity, and fell at last into an error, equally subversive of the dictates of common sense, as it is of christian piety, and diametrically opposite to all scripture: let us remember, however, that his follies and persecutions were the occasion of exhibiting some excellent characters even in the eastern church, who showed that they bore not the christian name without a just title to that best of all appellations.

CHAPTER IV.

MISCELLANEOUS AFFAIRS TO THE END OF THE CENTURY.

JUSTIN, the nephew of Justinian, succeeded.¹ He recalled the bishops whom the late emperor had exiled, Eutychius, of Constantinople, alone excepted. The reason of this exception I cannot learn; but, after the decease of John, his successor, who held the see twelve years, Justin was prevailed on to restore Eutychius, who continued bishop of

Constantinople till his death. His integrity and piety should scarce be doubted after the long course of suffering which he sustained on account of the faith of Jesus. But, in his old age, he embraced a whimsical notion, that our bodies after the resurrection become thinner than air. A notion which it would not have been worth while to have mentioned at all on its own account. But it is a specimen of the low state of christian knowledge in the East, and of the predominancy of Origenism and Platonism, which had never been exterminated in Asia, since they had gained admission into the church. For the opinion, though not so fundamentally erroneous as that of Justinian, originated from the same chimerical school: and we may see what a blessing it was to the West to have been instructed in christian doctrines of grace through Augustine, whence the purity and simplicity of the faith was preserved in a much superior manner, and fantastic notions could not so easily be received among them.²

A number of Britons having been expelled from their country by the arms of the Anglo-Saxons, who had entered the island in the year 446, crossed the sea, and settled in the adjacent parts of France. Hence the origin of the French province of Brittany. With them the faith of the gospel was preserved, as well as with their brethren in Wales and Cornwall, and some parts of Scotland and Ireland, while the major part of England was covered with Saxon idolatry. Sampson, originally a Welchman, left his own country and came into Brittany. This man founded a monastery at Dol, and was bishop of Dol himself some years. He died about the year 565, and was renowned for piety and learning in his day. He had been educated in his native country by Heltut, who was said to have been the disciple of Germanus of Auxerre. Thus the seed sown in our island by that holy person brought forth fruit; and it is only to be regretted, that the accounts of these things are so slight and scanty. About the same time died St. Malo, who, to prevent his being appointed bishop of Winchester, forsook our island, and fled to the coast of France. To the west of Brittany there was an island called Aletha, now called St. Malo's, the greatest part of the inhabitants of which were Pagans. At the desire of the few christians who were there, Malo laboured among them, till most of the inhabitants received the gospel, and persuaded him to reside among them, as their bishop, which he did till his death.¹ Other British bishops are celebrated, who in the same age were distinguished for their piety and useful labours in Brittany.

Gildus, surnamed the Wise, another dis-

^a Eutychius, however, before he died, retracted his error.

¹ Fleury, B. XXXIV. 14.

^a Gal. I. Evagrius, B. IV. toward the end.

¹ Evagrius, V. C. 3.

ciple of Hektut, was born at D. abritton in Scotland; he preached with much success, in the best sense, so far as appears, in his native country and in Ireland. He afterwards came over into Brittany, and built the monastery of Baig, which is still called by his name, says my author. Two of his discourses on the ruin of Great Britain are still extant, in which he deploras the vices and calamities of the times, and with honest vehemence exhorts to repentance six British princes, ascribing the devastations made by the Saxons to the depravity of his countrymen. His addresses with much spirit the clergy of Great Britain, and rebukes them for their ignorance, avarice, and sinony.

From these hints, in conjunction with what has been elsewhere related, these things are evident; namely, that there had been a considerable degree of pure religion among our ancestors before the invasion of the Saxons; that even after the declension and decay, there were still faithful pastors, who carried back into France with success that spirit of godliness which the latter country, by the means of Germanus of Auxerre, had brought over into our island; and that the poison of Pelagianism must have had a considerable influence in the production of that national decay of piety, which Gildas so feelingly deploras.

Columban, an Irish priest in this century, came over into the northern parts of Scotland, and laboured with much success among the Picts.^a The southern parts of Scotland had been evangelized long before by the instructions of Ninias, a British bishop, who had himself been instructed at Rome. Columban lived thirty-four years after his passage into Britain. His disciples were remarkable for the holiness and abstemiousness of their lives. Thus, while the gospel was rapidly withdrawing from the East, where it first arose, God left not himself without witness in the most distant parts of the West.

Radeagunda, daughter of Bertharius, king of Thuringia, having been taken captive by the Franks in her infancy, fell to the lot of king Clotaire, who married her. This woman might have been added to the list of those pious persons of her sex, who were made highly instrumental in instructing mankind, had she not imbibed monastic ideas, the pest which infected godly persons, in general, in these times, and which, though it could not ruin their relation to God, cut off the greatest part of their usefulness. She obtained a separation from her husband, and followed the monastic rules with great austerity to her death. These rules were now grown stricter than ever; the vows were made

perpetual, and we must leave this godly queen in the nursery, who might have caused her light to shine in a blessed manner in the world.

Toward the latter end of this century, the Lombards came from Pannonia into Italy, and settled there under Alboinus, their first king. They fixed their metropolis at Pavia. As they were Arians by profession, hereby again took root in Italy, whose inhabitants felt all the horrors and miseries which a savage and victorious nation could inflict. But the charob needed the scourge: the Roman See had been dreadfully corrupt under Vigilius, and formal superstition was corroding the vitals of genuine godliness.

At the same time John Climachus flourished, who was abbot of the monastery of Mount Sinai, in Arabia, near to which was a little monastery, called the Prison, in which all who had committed any great crime, since they entered on the monastic state, voluntarily confined themselves. The account which Climachus gives of it is striking. The poor prisoners spent their time in prayer, with every possible external mark of self-denial and wretchedness. They did not allow themselves any one comfort of human life. In their prayers they did not dare to ask to be delivered entirely from punishment; they only begged not to be punished with the utmost rigour. The voluntary torments they endured were amazing, and this voluntary humility of theirs continued till death. But I turn from the disagreeable scene to make one remark.

How precious is the light of the gospel! how gladly, we may suppose, would many of these miserable persons have received the doctrine of free forgiveness by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, if it had been faithfully preached among them! How does their seriousness rebuke the levity of presumptuous sinners among ourselves, who trifle with the light! how deeply fallen was the East from the real genius of Christianity, when men distressed for sin could find no hope but in their own formalities and rigid austerities!

In the year 584, Levigildus, king of the Visigoths in Spain, having married his eldest son Hermenigildus, to Ingonda, daughter of the French king, began to find effects from the marriage, which he little expected. Ingonda, though persecuted by her mother-in-law, the wife of the Spanish monarch, persevered in orthodoxy, and, by the assistance of Leander, bishop of Seville, under the influence of divine grace, brought over her husband to the faith. The father, enraged, commenced a grievous persecution against the orthodox in his dominions. Hermenigildus was led into the grievous error of rebelling against his father, not through ambition, it seems, but through fear of his father, who

^a Probably they were originally Britons, who fled into Scotland from the arms of the Saxons, and were called Picts, because they painted their bodies, according to the custom of our barbarous ancestors.

appeared to be bent on his destruction. Being obliged to fly into a church, he was induced by his father's promises to surrender himself. Levigildus at first treated him with kindness, but afterwards banished him to Valentia. His wife Ingonda flying to the Grecian emperor died by the way. Some time after, the young prince, loaded with iron, had leisure to learn the vanity of earthly greatness, and exhibited every mark of piety and humility. His father sent to him as Arian bishop, offering him his favour, if he would receive the communion at his hands. Herminigildus continued firm in the faith, and the king, enraged, sent officers, who dispatched him. The father lived however to repent of his cruelty; and the young prince, notwithstanding the unjustifiable step into which his passions had betrayed him, had lived long enough to give a shining example of christian piety. Levigildus, before he died, desired Leander, bishop of Seville, whom he had much persecuted, to educate his second son Recaredus in the same principles in which he had instructed his eldest. Recaredus succeeded his father in the government, and embraced orthodoxy with much zeal. The consequence was the establishment of orthodoxy in Spain, and the destruction of Arianism, which had now no legal settlement in the world, except with the Lombards in Italy. Though this account be general and external, it seemed proper to give it, as an illustrious instance of the work of divine providence, effecting, by the means of a pious princess, a very salutary revolution in religion.

I have collected in this chapter the few events which appeared worthy of notice, from the death of Justinian to the end of this century, with a studied exclusion of the concerns of Gregory the first, bishop of Rome. He is a character deserving to be exhibited distinctly. And in connection with his affairs, whatever else has been omitted, which falls within our plan, may be introduced in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

GREGORY THE FIRST, BISHOP OF ROME. HIS PASTORAL LABOURS.

He was a Roman by birth, and of a noble family. But being religiously disposed, he assumed the monastic habit, and was eminently distinguished by the progress he made in piety.* It was not till after he was drawn

back, in a degree, to a secular life by his employments in the church, that he became thoroughly sensible what advantage he had enjoyed for his own soul from religious retirement. With tears he owned, that he had had the world under his feet, while he was absorbed in heavenly contemplation; but was now bereft of comfort. "Now," says he, "my mind, by reason of pastoral cares, is oppressed with the business of secular persons, and after so fair an appearance of rest, is defiled with the dust of earthly action. And suffering itself to be distracted by exterior things in condescension to many, even while it desires inward things, it returns to them, without doubt, more faintly. I weigh, therefore, what I endure: I weigh what I have lost, and while I look at that which I have lost, my present burdens are more heavy."

In truth, in different periods of his life he moved in opposite extremes. He was one while dormant in the quietism of solitude; another while, involved in the multiplicity of episcopal cares at Rome. If his lot had been cast in the earlier and purer days of christianity, he would neither have been a monk, nor a bishop charged with such extensive secular concerns, and so would have avoided the evils of which he complains. The great Sces in these times, that of Rome in particular, through the increasing growth of spiritual dominations, and the load of worldly business very improperly connected with it, worldly, though in some senses ecclesiastical, were indeed agreeable enough to minds like that of Vigilius, earthly and ambitious, but were fatiguing beyond measure to men like Gregory, who unfeignedly loved heavenly things. Nothing could be more unwise than the custom which prevailed of encouraging monasticism and very large episcopal governments at the same time. The transition from the one to the other, as in Gregory's case (and it was a common one) must to holy minds, like his, have been a trial of no small magnitude. The serious complaints, however, which Gregory made of this trial during the whole scene of his bishopric, proceeded from the spirituality of his affections; and all, who have enjoyed in private the sweets of communion with God, and have found how difficult it is, in the hurry of business, to preserve a degree of the same spirit, will sympathize with him. A mediocrity, and a mixture of employment and retirement are, doubtless, the best situation for religious improvement.

Being drawn from his monastery, and ordained to the ministry, he was sent from Rome to Constantinople, to transact ecclesiastical affairs. Here he became acquainted

* Gregory of Tours, B. VIII. C. ult.

* Bede Eccles. Hist. B. II. C. I.

It should be observed here, that before this he had studied the Roman jurisprudence, was eminent in that and every other fashionable secular kind of knowledge, had been distinguished as a senator, and promot-

ed by Justin II. to the government of the city of Rome, an arduous and important office, which he had discharged with singular prudence, fidelity, and justice.

with Leander, afterwards bishop of Seville, the same person that we have spoken of in the relation of the affairs of Spain. Leander and he found in each other a similarity of taste and spirit; Gregory opened his heart to him: "I found my soul," says he, "convinced of the necessity of securing salvation; but I delayed too long, entangled with the world. At length I threw myself into a monastery; now I thought I had placed an insuperable bar between myself and the world. But again I am tossed on the tempestuous ocean, and unless I may enjoy the communion of my brethren, I can find no solace to my soul."

He had, however, taken with him some of the brethren of his monastery, and with them had enjoyed the benefit of christian discourse, and of searching the scriptures. Here, by the exhortation of his brethren, he began his long commentary on the book of Job, which he finished in his episcopacy.³ His residence at Constantinople was not without, at least, some use to the church. By his arguments and influence he quashed the fanciful notion of the archbishop Eutychius, concerning the qualities of the human body after the resurrection, which has been mentioned already. Had it not been for the timely and vigorous opposition of a man so respectable as Gregory was for knowledge and piety, the notion might have continued with many, to the disgrace of Christianity, at this day. The emperor Tiberius, who had succeeded Justin, supported the labours of Gregory with his authority.

Gregory, even from his youth, was afflicted with frequent complaints in his stomach and bowels; and by his own account in his letters, appears to have suffered much in his body all his days. The vigour of his mind was not however depressed, and perhaps few men ever profited more than he did by such chastisements. His labours, both as a pastor, and an author, were continued, and, in all probability, received peculiar unction from his afflictions.

After his return to Rome, there was so great an inundation of the Tiber, that it flowed upon the walls of the city, and threw down many monuments,⁴ and ancient structures. The granaries of the church were overflowed, by which a prodigious quantity of wheat was lost. Presently after, an infectious distemper invaded the city. Pelagius the bishop fell a victim to it among the first. The destruction prevailed, and many houses were left without an inhabitant. In this distress the people were anxious to choose a bishop in the room of the deceased Pelagius, and by unanimous consent the elec-

tion fell upon Gregory. He, with that humility which formed invariably a striking feature of his character, earnestly refused, and loudly proclaimed his own unworthiness. He did more; he wrote to Mauritius, the successor of Tiberius, beseeching him to withhold his assent.⁵ Germanus, the governor of Constantinople, intercepting the messenger, and opening the letter of Gregory, informed Mauritius of the election. The emperor confirmed it with pleasure. In the mean time the plague continued to make dreadful havoc; and Gregory, however backward to receive the office of a bishop, forgot not the duties of a pastor. A part of his sermon on this occasion may give us some idea of the best preaching of those times; for I know none in those days, which is superior, and but little which is equal, to that of Gregory.

"Beloved brethren, we ought to have feared the scourge of God before it came; at least, after having felt it, let us tremble. Let grief open to us the passages of conversion, and let the punishment which we feel dissolve the hardness of our hearts. For, to use the prophet's language, 'the sword hath come even into the soul.' Our people, behold, are smitten with a weapon of divine indignation, and each is carried off by the rapid devastation. *Langor* does not precede death, but death itself with hasty strides, as you see, outstrips the tardy course of *langor*. Every person, who is smitten, is carried off, before he has opportunity to bewail his sins. Conceive in what state that man will appear before his Judge, who is hurried off in the midst of his sins.—Let each of us repent, while we have time to weep, before the sword devour us.—Let us call our ways to remembrance.—Let us come before his face with confession, and lift up our hearts with our hands to the Lord.—Truly he gives to our trembling hearts a confidence, who proclaims by the prophet, 'I would not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live.' Let none despair on account of the greatness of his crimes. Think how the inveterate evils of the Ninevites were wiped off by three days repentance;" and the converted robber in the very article of death obtained the rewards of life. Let us change our hearts, and encourage ourselves beforehand with the thought that we have obtained what we ask.—Importunity, so dis-

³ The assent of the emperor to the election of a bishop of Rome appears plainly to have been necessary by the custom of these times. But the total exclusion of the people from all concern in these appointments had not yet obtained. It is obvious to be noticed also, how dependent the bishop of Rome was on the emperor. Antichrist had not yet formally begun his reign, nor would he have been known at Rome to this day, had all the bishops resembled Gregory.

⁴ I translate faithfully: the expression marks the want of evangelical accuracy in Gregory, though not surely the want of evangelical humility. It is not to be imagined, that he considered repentance as a pragmatic atonement for sin.

¹ Gregor. Pref. to Job, C. 1.

² Bede.

³ Vita Gregor. incert. autor.

⁴ These inundations of the Tiber were not uncommon. The classical reader will recollect in Horace, Ode 14, Lib. 1.

⁵ Ire dejectum monumenta regis &c

agreeable to man, is well pleasing to the Judge of truth; because the good and merciful Lord loves to be overcome by prayers.—Remember the Psalmist: 'call upon me in the time of trouble; so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me.' He admonishes us to call upon his name, and witnesses by this his readiness to forgive."

He concluded his discourse with appointing a lityny* to be performed by seven companies, who were to march at break of day from different churches, and to meet at one place. The first company consisted of the clergy; the second, of abbots with their monks; the third, of abbesses with their nuns; the fourth, of children; the fifth, of laymen; the sixth, of widows; the seventh, of married women. Fourscore persons in one hour, while the people were supplicating in the lityny, died of the plague. Gregory, however, persisted in praying and preaching, till the plague ceased.

He was all this time as eager to avoid the honour of the episcopal office, as he was to discharge the duty of it. The gates were watched, and his flight was prevented for a time. But he found means to be conveyed in a wicker basket out of the city, and concealed himself three days. The zealous search of the people discovered him at length, and he was obliged to enter upon his bishopric. This happened in the year 590.

Gregory continued to discharge the office in the same spirit, in which he began it. Other bishops had been sedulous to adorn churches with gold or silver; he gave himself wholly, so far as he could, to the care of souls." The melancholy circumstances of his accession corresponded with the gloomy state of the church, in the East almost universally fallen, in the West tarnished with much superstition, and defiled by variety of wickedness. The whole period of his episcopacy, which was thirteen years and a half,^x was disastrous beyond measure, because of the ferocious Lombards; and Gregory himself was firmly persuaded, that the end of the world was near. Hence he had evidently a strong contempt of sublunary things, and loved to refresh his mind with prospects beyond the grave. Nor has the sceptical, philosophical taste, as it is called, of this day, any reason to plume itself on comparison with that of Gregory. What is there, for instance, in the scene we have been just reviewing, which should excite the contempt of the philosopher, or rather, of the infidel who calls himself philosopher? Some superstition has appeared in it: it was an age of superstition: the form of Christianity was degenerated even in the best; but the divine religion sparkled through the gloom in the real life of humility, faith, and repentance.

The spiritual benefit of many, it is highly probable, resulted from the pastoral labours and litanies of Gregory; and whether is more rational, namely, to fear the wrath of God, when his hand is upon us, to weep and pray, and implore his grace and mercy, in reliance on the promises of his word, beholding the scourge as really sent from God; or to harden the heart in jocosé and fastidious sneers at the weakness of superstition, and to see nothing and to learn nothing that may lead us to repentance, from the desolating judgments of the Almighty?

In Gregory's works we have a collection of epistles, which will give us a view of his labours and transactions. Discipline, and indefatigable attention to order, justice, mercy, and piety, mark all his proceedings. The inordinate amplitude of authority and of extensive jurisdiction, to which superstition had already advanced the Roman See, and which afforded such copious fuel to pride and ambition in some of his predecessors, and many of his successors, was to him only the cause of anxious care and conscientious solicitude. Italy and Sicily were of themselves too large a theatre of action; but with the government of these he received the prevailing notion of a superintendence of the Roman See over all the churches, derived from St. Peter. In him, at least, the idea excited no pleasing sensations of dominion. A fatherly inspection of Christendom without civil power called him to incessant labour; besides that his own diocese was much too great for any one man's capacity. Humility and the fear of God were his ruling dispositions; and it is evident to a careful observer of Gregory, that he exerted authority in full consistency with these. Moreover he found time to expound the scriptures, to perform the office of a sedulous pastor, and to write much for the instruction of mankind. Deeply must the spirit of that man have been impressed with the prospects and hopes of immortality, who amidst bodily infirmities, and in times of public perplexity, could persevere in such a course of arduous labour. I shall endeavour to enable the reader to form a judgment for himself of the man, by a review of his letters; omitting those which are the least interesting.

He directed the bishops of Sicily to hold an annual visitation at Syracuse or Catana under his subdeacon, and to attend in it to things which related to the public and ecclesiastical welfare, to relieve the necessities of the poor and oppressed, and to admonish and correct those who had fallen into errors. In which council he begs that they would be guarded against malice, envy, and discord, and maintain a godly unity and charity.^y

He reminds the prætor of Sicily, whose

* The word signifies Supplication.
^x Bode. ^y Idem.

duty it was to send him into Italy from that fruitful granary of the empire, to be just and equitable in his dealings, to remember that life is short, that he must soon appear before the Judge of all, and that he can carry away with him nothing of his gains, and that only the causes and methods of his gains will follow him to judgment."

To a friend he writes thus on his promotion: "I value not the congratulations of strangers on my advancement. But it is a serious grief to me, that you, who know me thoroughly, should felicitate me on the occasion. Ye have long known my wish; I should have obtained the rest which I sought, could I have been gratified in it."

"If charity," says he, writing to John bishop of Constantinople, "consist in the love of our neighbour, why do not ye love me as yourselves? With what ardour and zeal ye would fly from the weight of episcopacy I know, and yet ye took no pains to hinder the imposition of this burden on me. But as the government of an old and crazy vessel is committed to me, weak and unworthy as I am, I beseech you, by the Lord, that you would stretch out the hand of prayer to my relief."

The employment of deciding causes, which in these times fell to the lot of bishops, must have been tedious and burdensome to a mind of conscientious exactness, like that of Gregory. Hear how feelingly he complains of the load, in a letter to Theodora, sister to the emperor.

"Under colour of the bishopric, I find I am brought back to the world, in which I am enslaved to such a quantity of earthly cares, as I never remember to have been infected with in my lay capacity. I have lost the sublime joys of myself, and, sinking inwardly, seem to rise externally. I deplore my expulsion from the face of my Maker. I was endeavouring to live out of the world and the flesh; to drive away all the phantasms of body from the eyes of my mind, and to see supernal joys mentally, and with my inmost soul panting after God, I said, my heart hath said to thee, 'thy face, Lord, will I seek.' Desiring nothing, and fearing nothing of the world, I seemed to have almost realized that of the prophet: 'I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.' Surely it is so with him, who looks down from his intellectual elevation on all the grandeur and glory of the earth. But suddenly from the heights of peace and stability, impelled by the whirlwind of this temptation, I have fallen into fears and terror; because though I fear not for myself, I fear much for those who are committed to my charge: I am shaken with the fluctuations of causes on all sides, and say, 'I am come into deep waters, so that the floods run

over me.' After the hurry of causes is over I desire to return to my heart, but excluded from it by the vain tumults of thoughts, I cannot return." Such is the picture which Gregory draws of his arduous situation in the midst of all his envied greatness. Experience and habit might in time lessen his anxieties. Nor was it through want of capacity for business that he suffered thus extremely. No age ever saw a bishop more vigorous, firm, and circumspect. The immensity of ecclesiastical employment, which went through his hands, seems almost incredible. I rejoice to find in him such vivid tokens of that spiritual sensibility and life, which it is the great business of this history to delineate, as it appeared from age to age in the church, and which distinguishes real Christians as much from nominal ones, as from all other men. In the mean time I have to regret, that while the power and experience of godliness decayed, the amplitude of bishoprics was so much augmented, and that so much extraneous matter, which ought to have been committed to other hands, was thrown upon them. The consequence has been, that the dignitaries of the church have ever since been thrown into circumstances peculiarly disadvantageous. Those of a secular spirit have toiled with eagerness in the work, for worldly and selfish ends, without feeling any injury to the spiritual life, because they had none; those of an heavenly spirit have felt like Gregory under the united pressures of conscientious care and the tumult of thoughts very alien from the Christian life, and tending to extinguish it.

The pious and upright Anastasius of Antioch has been already introduced to the reader's notice. Gregory had contracted an intimacy with him while in the East, and he writes to him thus in answer to his letter: "I received your letter, as a weary man does rest, as a sick man health, as a thirsty person a fountain, as one overcome with heat a shade. I read not mere words; I perceived the heart itself to be discovering your affection towards me in the spirit." He goes on to complain of Anastasius's cruel kindness in having contributed to his promotion, and describes his burdens in his usual manner. "But when you call me the mouth and lamp of the Lord, and a person capable of profiting many, this is added to the load of my iniquities, that I receive praise instead of punishment for my sins. How I am over-loaded, no words can express; you may form some idea from the brevity of my letter, in which I say so little of him whom I love above all. I have begged of the Emperor to allow you to visit me at Rome, that while I enjoy your company, we may relieve the tediousness of our pilgrimage by conversing together of the heavenly country."⁴ It is

not easy for persons unacquainted with their own heart to believe all this sense of unworthiness to be genuine in Gregory; men who know themselves will believe that he spoke sincerely.

Gregory was solicitous for the conversion of the Lombards from the Arian heresy, and therefore he wrote to the bishops of Italy, to avail themselves of their influence to write all the young persons of that nation, who had been baptised in the Arian communion, to the general church, to preach to them the doctrine of eternal life, and to secure to themselves a pleasing account of their pastoral labours at the last day.* Under his administration a gradual accession of this people was made to the church, notwithstanding the great power of the Lombard princes, and their obstinate attachment to Arianism. Indeed the shining example of Gregory himself must have made a very powerful impression on the minds of all who had opportunity of knowing him. He was careful to preserve the great revenues of the church, but no man was ever more conscientious to employ them to good purposes. As he loved to imitate his predecessor Gelasius, he followed the statement of the revenues which he had drawn up, and formed an estimate of them in money; distributions of which he made to the clergy, monasteries, churches, the officers of his house, deaconries, and hospitals. He regulated the sums to be allotted to each at four times of the year, an order which was observed three hundred years after. A great volume was kept in the palace of the Lateran, containing the names of the poor, who were the objects of his liberality, their age and circumstances, at Rome, in Italy, and even in distant provinces. On every first day of the month, he distributed to the poor's necessities, according to the season, various articles of provision. Every day he distributed alms to the sick and infirm; and before he sat down to eat, he sent portions from his table to some indigent people, who were ashamed to appear. It would be tedious to recount from his letters the instances of his liberality. He pressed his agents to inform him of objects, and loved to exceed the expectations of his petitioners. But while he abounded in benefactions, he would receive none himself. "We ought to refuse," said he, writing to Felix bishop of Messina, "presents, which are expensive to the churches. Send to the other clergymen every year what is established by usage. But as I love not presents, I forbid you to send me any for the future. I thank you for the palm-tree which you sent me, but I have caused them to be sold, and have sent you the price of them." The unhappy wars

of Italy having caused great desolations of the churches, that the remaining inhabitants might not be forsaken, he gave those churches in charge to the neighbouring bishops. If two of them did not contain, singly, a sufficient number of persons to constitute a diocese, he joined them together under one bishop, insisting on equal care being taken of that in which he did not reside, as of that in which he did. He made no difficulty of obliging a bishop to leave a small church, where he was little more than titular pastor, to govern a more important one.^b Having discovered several abuses committed in the management of the revenues in Sicily, he took care to reform them. "We are informed," says he, "that corn is bought of the peasants, under the market price; I direct that they be paid always according to the current price, without deducting the corn lost by shipwreck, provided that you take care that they do not transport it out of season. We forbid all base exactions; and that after my death the farmers may not be charged anew, let a certificate be delivered to them in writing, containing the sum which each is obliged to pay. Take particular care, that false weights be not made use of in receiving the payments, as the deacon Servus Dei discovered, but break them in pieces, and cause new ones to be made. I have been informed, that farmers are distressed at the first time of the payment of their rents; for, having not yet sold their fruits, they are obliged to borrow at heavy interest. Supply them therefore out of the stock of the church with what they may have borrowed, and receive their payments by degrees, lest you oblige them to sell their commodities at an under price, to make good their rents. In general, I WILL NOT SUFFER THE CHURCH TO BE DEFILLED BY BASE GAINS."^c

This is a specimen of the uprightness and attention of Gregory to those secular concerns, under which his spirit so much groaned. A pharisee would have found a mental feast in so much beneficence. But Gregory was humble; he could not find rest to his soul in such exercises, however laudable; and though his heart and head seemed as well fitted as any man's in any age for such work, and though he went through it with much ability and success, yet it were to be wished, that he had been allowed more time to pay attention to the more spiritual duties of his state. The short extract however (for the account might have been swelled to a large size) may deserve some attention from persons, whether ecclesiastical or secular, whose employments are of a similar nature. Let them ask themselves, whether with Gregory's care for the

* Ep. 17.
Vol. IV.

^b Ep. 18, 44, 23, 57, C^d, 54, 30.

^c Fleury, B. XXXV. C. XV.

^b B. I. Ep. 42.—He writes thus to Peter his agent in Sicily.

^c Ep. 64, de. D. II. Ep. 20.

preservation of their rights, (and in that he was as firm and strenuous as Christian charity allows), they are also like him upright, disinterested, and merciful. And as human malignity has been abundantly gratified in large details of the encroachments and oppressions of churchmen, it falls within the plan of these memoirs, to shew that all churchmen have not been thus iniquitous; that those who are humble and evangelically pious, are also, above all men, upright, munificent, and liberal.

Peter, bishop of Terraco in Spain, had consented to a species of persecution of the Jews in his diocese, by permitting them to be molested in their festivities, and to be more than once driven from the place in which they celebrated them. Let those, who have been led by fashionable historians to annex the idea of persecution to that of the priesthood, take notice, that Gregory bishop of Rome wrote to Peter, to condemn the practice, and to give his decisive opinion, that the Jews should not be in the least molested, that they ought to be won over to the faith by THE SWEETNESS of gospel-preaching, and by the denunciation of divine judgments against infidelity, and that these were christian arts and methods, while those of a different nature tended only to harden and disgust the human mind.^a

To Leander of Seville^b he expresses with tears the pressures of his mind under loads of solicitude, and earnestly entreats his prayers. He congratulates him also on the conversion of king Recaredus of Spain, and while he rejoices at the news of that prince's piety and virtues, he admonishes the bishop to watch over the royal convert, that his life may correspond to so hopeful a beginning. He wrote some time after to the same prince, to recommend to him a strong guard over anger, pride, and lust, vices more peculiarly apt to infest princes. Of all the princes of this time, he seems most to have adorned the gospel. He was just, munificent, and liberal. And before he left the world he publicly confessed his sins, and appeared to have been possessed of true piety, so far as we can judge. He died about the close of this century.

To Virgilius and Theodorus, bishops of Marseilles, he writes on occasion of the persecuting methods made use of against the Jews. He again bears testimony against the compulsory practices; he declares how sorry he is to find, that many of that people had been brought to the baptismal font by violence rather than by preaching. "If a Jew is brought thither by necessity, not by the sweetness of the word, returning to his former superstition, he dies in a worse state than that from which he seemed to be regenerated. Preach frequently to them,

that they may desire to be changed, through the love of what they hear: Thus your desire of saving souls will be accomplished, and the convert will not return like the dog to his vomit. Preach, that their dark minds may be illuminated, and that under God they may be brought to real regeneration."^a

He wrote also to Pascasius, bishop of Naples, complaining of the violence used to the Jews in driving them from their solemnities. He blames this method, and exhorts to the same purpose as before.^b It is well known what different methods have been, since Gregory's time, supported by the Roman Popes. I appropriate the term Pope to Antichrist, who did not, accurately speaking, exist as yet in the Western church. On the other side he was zealous to suppress the attempts of Jews to seduce Christians, and prohibited their purchasing of Christians for slaves.^c

The Lombards were a constant scourge to Italy in the time of Gregory, and he was aware of their intentions to invade Sicily. Hence he wrote to all the bishops of the island to supplicate the Lord in litanies every fourth and sixth day of the week, and exhorted them not only to draw their flocks to this association of prayer, but also to preach to them the doctrine of repentance. "For if the gracious Lord behold us loving his commands, he is able to defend us from the enemy, and to prepare eternal joys for us."^d

Natalis, bishop of Salem, had written to Gregory in defence of the entertainments given by the clergy. The bishop of Rome allows his assertions, but under these important restrictions, "that no absent persons be slandered at these meetings, that none be made an object of ridicule, that the empty discourse of secular business be avoided, that the word of God be read in them, that no more meat and drink be used than is needful for the refreshment of the body, and to fit it for the discharge of duty. If this be your practice, I confess you to be masters of temperance."^e But it seems Gregory's animadversions on the feasting of the Salomonian clergy had given offence, by that which he adds: "You take it ill to be reprimanded by me, who, though I am your superior in church dignity (I do not mean as a man), am willing to be corrected and reproved by all. I thank, indeed, that man as my friend, through whose advice I am enabled to wipe off the blemishes of my soul before the appearance of the awful Judge." One cannot form any great idea of the piety of this Natalis, who had excused himself from assiduous reading the scriptures, partly on account of the pressure of tribulations, partly

^a B. I. Ep. 45. ^b B. II. Ep. 15. ^c B. II. Ep. 76.
^d B. IX. 45. Hence I apprehend the origin of the use of the Litany on Wednesdays and Fridays in public worship.

^e B. II. 57.

^a B. I. Ep. 54.

^b Ep. 41.

by a mere cavil, because our Lord had told his disciples, that it should be given them in the same hour what they should say. Gregory informs him, that the scriptures were given us, that we, through patience and comfort of them, might have hope. How he answers the cavil, it is not necessary to say. "But we cannot be like you," Natalis had said. The bishop of Rome was not to be seduced by such evasive flattery. "The encomiums you bestow on me," said he, "seem to be spoken in derision, because I cannot in truth find them realized in my experience." We see in all this, on one side, a zealous pastor labouring to revive a sense and spirit of godliness in his brethren; on the other, a slothful and false-hearted ministry, poorly excusing itself by feigned apologies, from doing the Lord's work with vigour and sincerity.

After having given a beautiful description of charity in writing to Dominicus bishop of Carthage, he shews how deeply his soul was penetrated with the importance of the pastoral office. In their views of this, many of the ancient Fathers, whom we deride for their superstitions, do far excel the generality of pastors in our times. Let him who has entered on this office with merely secular views read, and, if he can, blush and weep, after he has considered, that no age since the Apostles' days has ever seen one more intently and sincerely laborious than Gregory. "Weighty indeed is the office of a Pastor. He must be an example to the flock, and after this he must learn to keep himself humble. He must ever be intent on the ministry of the word, remembering who hath said, OCCUPY TILL I COME. This we then truly execute, when by life and doctrine we gain the souls of our neighbours, strengthen the weak by setting before them the joys of the heavenly kingdom, and bend the proud by sounding aloud the punishments of hell, when we spare none against truth, and when given up to heavenly friendships, we fear not human enmity. I tremble at my own infirmity. How can I sustain the last judgment, seeing so very little fruit of my labours. Dearest brother, I implore your prayers for me. By the union of charity, we have a common interest."

To Boniface, bishop of Rhegium, he gives a handsome reproof for boasting of the good deeds he had done. He owned that he rejoiced to hear of his works of mercy. But he was sorry to find, that he himself had spoken of them to many persons. He warns him to take care that he did not mar the whole by ostentation. "What are we, dust and ashes, that we should covet the praise of men? Him you should seek to please, whose coming we expect, and whose retributions will know no end."

• B. II. 39.

• B. II. 43.

Evangelus, a deacon of the church of Syportum, had complained to Gregory that his daughter had been deflowered by Felix, the grandson of the bishop of the same name. The bishop of Rome, not without some animadversion on the bishop's careless education of his grandson, ordered, on supposition of the truth of the fact, that Felix should be obliged to marry the young woman, or, in a case of refusal, be scourged and confined in a monastery, excommunicated, and remain in a state of penance, and not be suffered to go abroad till farther orders were received from Gregory. It seemed proper to mention this ancient precedent of the practice of spiritual courts. Doubtless they were in their origin courts of censure on immoralities not so easily cognizable in courts of common law. The necessities of society, and the depravity of human nature, seem to require the existence of such tribunals. The Roman office of censor was of the same kind. Nor would mankind be disposed to depreciate them, were they naturally as sincere in their regard for the honour of God and for moral decorum, as they are for the preservation of property. The abuses of these courts among ourselves are well known. But why persons of rank and property in our country do not labour to regulate them, or rather, do not endeavour to institute a censorship of morals that shall be practicable and effectual,—why they indiscriminately condemn the whole principle, while they permit lewdness to be practised without any restraint,—are questions not hard to be determined. In the mean time, every lover of equity and decency should prefer a spiritual court, armed with some power for the suppression of vice, before the licentiousness, which, under the name of liberty, threatens among ourselves to destroy all the barriers which our ancestors erected against vice and immorality. Severe as Gregory's conduct may now seem, it was wholesome, no doubt, and society felt the good consequences.

In writing to Priscas, a patrician of the East, he justly describes the mixed state of human affairs, and the duties of Christian faith and humility. The thought is common to moralists in all ages; but Gregory ennobled it with some real principles of Christianity.

Gregory corresponded also with Theodolinda, the queen of the Lombards: she was the widow of their king Autharit, a zealous Arian. After his death she married Agilulfus, a Lombard, whom the nation received as king. Being orthodox herself, she brought over her husband, and the whole nation, at length, to the same persuasion. Gregory congratulated her on the happy prospect of the progress of Christianity.

• B. II. 79, 81.

mong the Lombards. What degree of real piety was in all this, does not appear: the temporal benefit of Gregory's labours was, however, evident in the establishment of peace for some time between the Lombards and the Roman empire."

Anastasius, bishop of Antioch, seems ever to have been a special favourite of Gregory. He had been ejected from his See by the injustice of Justin, the successor of Justinian, and had lived in exile a number of years. He was at length, however, restored to his See, and Gregory wrote a letter to him on the occasion, full of pious and tender sentiments. In this letter, he endeavours to solace the mind of the prelate with the same scriptural views and promises, with which his own had been refreshed under a variety of afflictions. The hope of glory, hereafter to be revealed, it is evident, was the spring of joy to his own soul, and enabled him to bear calamities with patience." In another letter to him, he writes, "You ought to keep in mind, as you do, what is written: 'In the last days perilous times shall come.'—And though in old age you suffer much, remember him, who told St. Peter, that when he was old, another should gird him. Yet, in saying this, I recollect, that from youth you have laboured in many adversities. Numbers rejoice at our sorrows, as you write; but we know who hath said, 'Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' We feel the performance of the former part, let us expect the latter part also. You say, that some who ought to relieve, add burdens to you; I know they are those who come in sheep's clothing, but who inwardly are ravening wolves. We are not disturbed on account of their ambition in arrogating all honour to themselves, because we trust in the Almighty, whose law and rule is, that those who covet what belongs to others, are sooner on that account deprived of their own. For we know who hath said, 'He that exalteth himself, shall be abased,' and, 'a haughty spirit before a fall.' In these days, as I find, new heretical wars arise, which would reduce to nothing the prophets, the gospels, and all the fathers together. But while Anastasius lives, we trust in the grace of our Protector; their swords will break in pieces, striking against a rock. The church, in the mean time, by the subtilty of heretics, is sharpened in her doctrine, and learns the truth more accurately. The heart of God approaches to us, and, by temptations, we are brought to feel him more sensibly. What I suffer from the swords of barbarians, and from the perverseness of judges, I spare to relate, that I may not increase the sorrow of

him whom I wish to console. But I weigh those words, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' The power of light then shall have its day afterwards; because the elect are the light of the world, and it is written, 'the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;' hence, all we suffer in the hour and power of darkness is not to be regretted. You wish, if it were possible, that we might converse without pen and ink, and it is a painful circumstance that we are almost as distant from one another as East and West. But truly we, whom grace hath not separated, are made one. Why wish you for the wings of a dove, which you have already? The wings are the love of God and our neighbour. By them the church flies through the earth: if you had not these wings, you would not have come to me with so much love by your epistles.—As your life is necessary to all good men, may you, after a long time, arrive at the joys of the heavenly country."

I have only to add concerning Anastasius, that he lived five years after his restoration, and died about the end of the century. We are much in the dark concerning the trials of this great and good man. Gregory's words however will stand as proper to be addressed to the suffering children of God in all ages. I conceive the bishop of Antioch to have been a luminary in the East, envied and persecuted extremely, bearing testimony to the faith of Christ in the decline of the Eastern church; whose life and transactions would be very instructive, if they had been transmitted to posterity.

John, bishop of Constantinople, disturbed in Gregory's time the peace of the church, by assuming to himself the title of universal bishop. The pride and arrogance with which he assumed it, was only equalled by the obstinacy with which he persevered. Gregory wrought with much vehemence against his haughtiness, and on this occasion, laid down some memorable rules of humility, which severely condemned, not himself, but his successors in the Roman See. In what a state must the East have been, to reverse as a great saint, both living and dying, so proud a man as John of Constantinople! But there godliness was nearly expiring, and the Mahometan scourge was at hand.

Gregory wrote to Doninus an African bishop, entreating his prayers, and thanking him for his presents. By this letter it appears that the spirit of true godliness was not yet extinct in Africa. There is another letter to the same person, who, it seems, was bishop of Carthage, full of the spirit of charity and devotion, though there is nothing in it that calls for any very particular attention."

• B. XII. Ep. 7. • B. IV. 81.
• Evagrius, B. VI. toward the end.

• B. VII. Ep. 3. • B. IV. 82.
• B. V. 126. • B. V. 126.

Cyrinus succeeded John of Constantinople, whose pride has been mentioned already. At his solemn ordination the people shouted, "this is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and begid in it." Superstition naturally paved the way for the dominion of the clergy; and the bishops of the great Sees were gradually increasing in secular grandeur. The congratulation just mentioned was calculated to encourage Cyrinus to emulate the ambition of his predecessor. Gregory^d justly finds fault with it, in a letter to the great men of Constantinople, shows that the acclamation properly belonged to the stone which the Lord had laid for a foundation in his church,^e and observes that it was impious to ascribe those praises to the creature, which belong to the Creator. Yet he is willing to excuse the mistake as proceeding from a charitable intention. Gregory, no doubt, had himself too high views of the dignity of his own See, and its supposed relation to Saint Peter blinded his judgment. The exaltation of Constantinople, through the domineering pretensions of the late bishop excited his jealousy; and so subtle and intricate are the motions of the heart, that he himself might not at all be aware of the selfishness, which probably influenced his conduct. I doubt not, however, from the unaffected humility of his whole life, that his heart detested sacerdotal ambition. The excessive dignity of the prelatial character would have done little harm to Christendom, had all prelates been like Gregory. But, as this was not to be expected, the state ought to have set bounds to ecclesiastical encroachments before this period.

Gregoria, a lady of the bedchamber to Augusta, the empress, in her anxiety for her soul, and in the height of her admiration of Gregory, by better requested him to inform her, if he could by revelation, that her sins were forgiven her.^f Gregory assured her, "that certainty in this matter was not attainable: we must repent and mourn over our sins, and apply for pardon continually." He declares himself unworthy of having such a revelation made to him, and gives her useful and salutary advice, so far as he saw into the system of divine truth. In regard to the doctrine of justification, he seems to have had the same confusion of ideas, and the same sentiments, which Augustine had. How superstition, servility, and darkness prevailed in the church at this time, is but too evident. Yet Gregory was a luminary, compared with most of his contemporaries.

To a person named Andrew, affecting secular greatness, he writes with much pathos on the vanity of sublunary things, a subject which he touched with more sensibility,

because he was strongly impressed with the idea of the world being nearly at an end.^g

Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, observing some of his people to adore the images which had been placed in churches, brake them in his zeal, and gave so much disgust by this conduct, that many withdrew from his communion. Gregory rebukes him on this account, and wishes him to conciliate the affections of the people, by allowing them to make use of images as pieces of history to instruct their minds in the great facts of christianity. He would have him to use them as books for the illiterate people, and at the same time to caution them seriously against paying any adoration to them.—I have stated the substance of the sentiments of both these bishops.^h It seems not probable, that those who deserted Serenus on this account, had much christianity to lose. Gregory had not the opportunity of knowing so well as we do the danger of his advice. Thus far is evident, that image-worship had not generally commenced in Gregory's time, and that he seriously reprobated the practice. The gradual approximation, however, to idolatry may be traced from these facts, and the danger of such a mode of teaching, as that which Gregory recommends, has been so abundantly proved since his time, that no doubt remains but in this instance, the bishop of Marseilles judged better than he.

The correspondence between Gregory and Brunehalt, the queen of Austrasia or Burgundy, a division of the French monarchy, which took place amidst the confusions of that country, after the death of Clovis, will deserve to be succinctly stated.ⁱ She was an ambitious, dissolute woman; yet, in that age of superstition, she endeavoured to impose both on herself and on the world by an appearance of piety. She attempted to extend her power while her young male descendants were on the throne; and permitted, or rather encouraged their vicious conduct, that she might herself keep the reins of government. Gregory, while he commends her respectful attention to the forms of religion, blames her ecclesiastical proceedings in some matters of great moment. He represents, with much earnestness, the irregular, and even simoniacal ordinations of pastors in France, and observes, with great energy, the deplorable state of the flocks, and the scandal of all godliness, which must ensue from such conduct. Finding that his remonstrances had little effect, he urges her still more strongly on the same subject, and observes the probability of divine vengeance overtaking her family, if she corrected not these enormities. It is remarkable, that this wicked woman was afterwards put to a cruel death, and that her

^d Psalm cxviii. 24.
^e B. VI. 141.

^f Psalm cxviii. 22.
^g B. VI. Ep. 135.

^h B. VI. Ep. 191.
ⁱ B. VII. 130. B. IX. 9.
^j B. VII. 113. B. IX. 57. 61.

descendants were slain or expelled. From some parts of the more early correspondence between them, one would think that Gregory thought highly of her virtues. Time, however, undeceived him, and it must be confessed, that he treated her with the undissembled plainness which becomes a christian pastor.

The bodily afflictions of Gregory, in connexion with the miseries of the times, are forcibly described in a letter to Italica, a patrician lady.¹

"I can find nothing else to say of myself, than that as a just punishment of my sins, I have been almost eleven months confined to my bed. I am so oppressed with the gout, that life is a heavy punishment. I faint daily through pain, and breathe after death as my remedy." Among the clergy and people of the city, scarce a freeman or a slave is exempt from fevers. Africa and the East are also full of misery and desolation. I see the end of all things approaching; be therefore less solicitous on account of your own calamities. Study with alacrity that godliness which has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

In a letter to Eulogius,¹ bishop of Alexandria, written in the year after, he says, "I have been near two years confined to my bed, in constant pain.—Often have I been forced to return to my bed, when I scarce had left it, by the violence of pain.—Thus I die daily, and yet live. But I am a grievous criminal, and, as such, deservedly shut up in so painful a prison. I daily cry with the psalmist, 'Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to thy name.' While he lived, he was frequently thus afflicted; but the vigour of his mind was unabated, and his faculties were unclouded.

Another instance of his bodily sufferings shall close this branch of his story. Writing to his friend Venantius, who was likewise afflicted with the gout, he says, "what ought we to do, but to call our sins to remembrance, and to thank God, that he purifies us by afflicting our flesh.—Let us take care, that we pass not from one degree of torment to another, and let us consider the goodness of God, who threatens us with death, that he may imprint in us an edifying fear of his judgments. How many sinners have continued immersed in sin through life without a headach, and have suddenly been cast into

hell!"—I rejoice to find in this great man the marks of that deep humility, which is known only to true converts, and of that wise improvement of affliction, of which theorists may reason, but which saints only feel. He concludes thus benevolently and piously to his friend: "May the Lord infuse into your soul these words by the inspiration of his Spirit, cleanse you from your iniquities, give you here the joy of his consolation, and eternal reward hereafter."²

Gregory having been informed, that Clementina, a woman of quality, had harboured some suspicions against him, wrote to her in a charitable spirit, and with the intention of effacing the disagreeable impressions. He at the same time mildly reproved her for the want of a placable and forgiving temper. He reminds her of the well-known petition in the Lord's prayer, and delivers several true but weighty sentiments adapted to the subject.³

On no occasion was Gregory wanting to impress on men's minds the care of the soul. Two persons having requested his assistance in their temporal difficulties, after having said what the case required, he exhorted them not to murmur at the divine dispensations, nor to undertake any thing unjust under the pretence of necessity; but to fix their hope on the mercy of their Redeemer, who forsaketh not those who trust in him, to occupy their minds with divine things, and to repose on him who gives what we have not, repairs what we have lost, and preserves what he has repaired.⁴

The subdeacon was an officer of the church, who superintended, under the bishop of Rome, the distant bishoprics and parishes which belonged to his jurisdiction.⁵ Gregory wrote to Anthemius, the subdeacon of Campania, that he had heard of Paschasius, a bishop, who was so slothful, that he neglected every pastoral duty, admitted of no advice, and gave himself up to the building of a ship. It seems he used to go down to the sea on this very unclerical employment with one or two of his clergymen, and was held in derision by all the country. Gregory directs his subdeacon to reprimand him in the presence of some presbyters, or gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and try by that method to reform him. Should that prove ineffectual, he enjoins him to send Paschasius to Rome, to answer for himself before Gregory.

I know not the result; but it seemed worth while to mention the case, as it illustrates the state of the church-disciple of that day, as well as the vigilant attention of Gregory. That so many should nominally sustain the pastoral character, whose taste and genius, as well as disposition and sentiments, are repugnant to it, and who seem qualified

¹ R. VII. 127.

² In another letter he speaks of a disorder different from the gout; namely, a grievous burning heat, that spread over all his body, and took away his spirits. By such severe exercises was this good man trained for the kingdom of heaven, and he evidently grew in humility, tender sympathy with others in distress, and ardent breathings for the heavenly country.

³ This Eulogius, by preaching and writing, strengthened the hands of the godly in the East, and lessened the influence of heretics. He seems, by Gregory's correspondence with him, to have been a wise and pious pastor, such as in Alexandria and the East were rarely to be found.

= B. IX. 25.
• B. XI. 23.

• B. VIII. 16.
• B. XI. 23.

to excel in any thing rather than what is sacerdotal, is matter for lamentation. The profane avarice of parents educating their children for the ministry at all events, is one great cause of it.

CHAPTER VI.

GREGORY'S CONDUCT TOWARD THE EMPERORS MAURITIUS AND PHOCAS.

It is impossible for any impartial person, who has attended to the spirit and conduct of Gregory, as exhibited in his pastoral memoirs, not to feel a conviction of the eminent piety, integrity, and humility of this bishop. Yet it has been the fashion to arraign his character with great severity, on account of his conduct in the latter part of his life. He has been accused of great ingratitude towards one excellent and virtuous emperor, and of egregious flattery towards another who was prodigate and tyrannical. The evidence already adduced of his disposition and temper should naturally dispose us to receive with much caution such grievous accusations. I shall throw together into this chapter the facts on which our judgment is to be founded.*

A series of events had given Gregory a strong prejudice against the government of Mauritius. Their opposition of sentiment had remarkably alienated their spirits from one another, though they once had the most sincere esteem for each other's character. Gregory had been very acceptable to Mauritius, who had strongly favoured his promotion to the bishopric. Nor is there any reason to doubt of the sincerity of the bishop's professions of a very high regard for the emperor, when he made them. Changes of this sort are common amongst mankind, nor are the declarations which men make at different times of the characters of the same persons, however contradictory, to be always charged to insincerity.

Mauritius made a law, to prohibit men, who had held civil offices under the government, from undertaking the administration of the church. Of this Gregory approved; but a clause in the same law, which forbade military men to enter into monasteries till the time of their service was expired, or till they were disabled for the profession, met not with the same approbation. Gregory, too fond of monastic institutions, and conceiving them necessary for the souls of some, though not of all, expostulated with the emperor on the impropriety of the decree. He does so, however, with all possible decency and respect, and lays open his sentiments with a frankness and modesty, which do honour to his character. Doubtless he was mistaken,

and the mistake was common to him with the most pious of those times. He promulgated, however, the emperor's decree through Italy, and thus, as he himself says, he was faithful to God, and obeyed his prince at the same time.†

In this transaction, in which it does not appear that he succeeded with the emperor, the zeal of Gregory was quickened by the strong presentiments of the near approach of the day of judgment, which filled his mind. This mistaken notion seems to have dwelt with Gregory; nor was it in him a mere speculation. He was practically serious in the expectation. I find him pressing it in another letter to the nobles and landholders of the island of Sardinia, whom he reproved for suffering their labourers to remain in a state of idolatry. He justly observes, that they were bound in conscience to take care of the spiritual instruction of those who laboured for them in temporal things, and he earnestly exhorts them to promote the charitable work.‡ The selfishness and insensibility, with which so many, in modern times, can reap lucrative advantages from the labours of mariners, slaves, and apprentices, with no more attention to their best interests, than if they were of the brute creation, here naturally forces itself on our attention. Other letters of the same kind, demonstrate the zeal of Gregory for the propagation of christianity among idolators and infidels.

Italy suffered extremely from the Lombards, as has been observed, nor can we form any hopeful idea of the real conversion of Agilulph, the husband of Theodelinda, since he still ravaged the Roman territories, and filled them with misery and desolation. These evils were a constant source of affliction to the tender spirit of Gregory, yet he failed not to improve them, IN HIS HOMILIES, TO THE INSTRUCTION OF HIS FLOCK. Willing to put a stop to the effusion of blood, and averse to shedding even that of the Lombards by nourishing intestine feuds among them, as he might have done, he strove to make peace with Agilulph, and had even succeeded, when the Exarch of Ravenna, the emperor's governor in Italy, perfidiously brake the peace, and provoked the Lombard king to renew his hostilities. The Exarch himself, finding his own profit in the continuance of the war, was for persevering in it at all events, and his heart was hardened against the sufferings of the people, which Gregory deplored. Involved as we find this holy bishop in political concerns far more than it were to be wished, it is yet pleasing to see him uniformly supporting the Christian character. For now a severe trial came upon him. Mauritius, induced by representations from the Exarch, reproached him severely with his conduct, and in effect called

* See Bower's history of the popes, Vol. ii. G.

† B. XII. Ep. 100.

‡ B. III. 23.

him a foolish person. Gregory, humble as he was, felt the indignity, of all others the hardest to be borne by men of understanding. Yet he checked his spirit, and brake not the just bounds prescribed to the christian and to the subject of an emperor. "While you reprove me," says he, "in sparing, you have not spared me. While you politely tax me with simplicity, you doubtless call me a fool. I own the charge. Had I not been so, I should not have come hither to this episcopal scene, to endure what I suffer amidst the Lombard wars.—Indeed if I saw not the daily increase of the calamities of the Romans, I should gladly be silent with respect to personal contempt. But this is my affliction; the same cause which subjects me to the imputation of folly, brings my countrymen under the yoke of the Lombards. And while I am not believed, the strength of the enemy increases mightily. This I suggest to my good Lord, that he may believe of me what evils he pleases, only let him not give his ears to any sort of persons concerning the public good, but regard facts more than words.—I know I am a sinner; I daily offend, and am daily chastised. I trust the chastisement of your displeasure will work for my good, among the rest, at the last day. But let me recount my grievances. First, the peace I had made with Aigilulph, with no loss to the state, is broken. In the next place, soldiers are removed from Rome, some to perish by the enemy, others to defend Perusium, while Rome is exposed to danger. Further, Aigilulph appears with his forces; with these eyes I have seen Romans, like dogs, tied with cords, and dragged to be sold as slaves among the Franks.—As to myself, in the integrity of my conscience I am not dejected with false accusations; I am prepared to endure all, provided my soul's salvation be not endangered. But it grieves me to the heart, that Gregory and Castorius, who did all that men could do, while Rome was besieged, have fallen under your displeasure on my account. That you threaten me with an awful account at the day of judgment, will require a few words in answer. I beseech you to cease from this language. 'Judge nothing before the time,' says that excellent preacher Paul. I only say this in brief, that, unworthy sinner as I am, I rest more on the mercy of Jesus than on your justice. Men are very ignorant of the measures of his judgment; perhaps what you commend, he will blame; and what you blame, he will commend. I leave uncertain things; I have recourse to prayers and tears alone, begging that the Lord would rule our plots emperor with his hand, and acquit him at that awful judgment; at the same time, that he would teach me so to please men, that I lose not his eternal grace."

• B. IV. Ep. 75.

I have already mentioned the jealous uneasiness of Gregory at the pride of John, bishop of Constantinople. The title of Universal Bishop, had upon his own application been conferred upon him in an Eastern council, and the policy of some former emperors had induced them to compliment the prelates of Constantinople with it; because the honour and influence of the imperial city were augmented by this means. Gregory was the more vexed at this, because the synod of Chalcedon had offered the same title to the Roman bishops, and they had not accepted it. He in his letters called himself the servant of the servants of God. Such humility might have been thought affected in a person not eminent for this grace. Doubtless it would have been more prudent in him not to have assumed it. But it continues to this day the title of his successors,—a standing mark of egregious hypocrisy! That which deceived Gregory in this case was the erroneous notion of the pre-eminence of his own See, as belonging to St. Peter; yet I no way doubt but he sincerely abhorred the pride of the eastern prelate. Had he himself, however, been more completely humble and less superstitious, he would have suffered the affair to pass with greater indifference. While in one respect we behold this good man acting the patriot and the Christian, relieving the distressed, and ransoming the captives with unbounded liberality, nominally possessing great ecclesiastical wealth, but employing it all to the most beneficent purposes, and sparing no labour or fatigue; in another we see him writing and negotiating with persevering vehemence concerning a title, in which, though his cause was unquestionably just, his eagerness was far too sanguine. He solicited the emperor Mauritius on the subject, but in vain. And this was an additional cause of the prejudices which they imbibed against each other.

Mauritius cannot be vindicated in supporting the odious pride of John against the just demands of Gregory. The evil, by the countenance of the emperor, continued, and John's successor assumed the same Antichristian title. But Gregory had still more weighty causes of complaint, and such as his episcopal duty called on him to lay before the emperor.

This he did in a letter to Constantia, the empress. "Knowing," says he, "that there were many Gentiles in Sardinia, that they worshipped idols, and that the clergy were remiss in preaching our Redeemer to them, I sent a bishop from Italy thither, who, the hand of the Lord being with him, brought over many of them to the faith. I am informed, that those, who persevere in idolatry,

• B. IV. Ep. 76.

• The term means idolaters in the language of the fathers. B. IV. Ep. 77.

give a fee to the judge of the island, that they may be allowed to do so with impunity. Some, having been baptized, and ceasing to worship idols, are still obliged to pay the same fine to the judge : " who, when the bishop blamed him, answered, that he had paid so much money for the purchase of his office, that he could not recover his expenses but by such perquisites. The island of Corsica also is oppressed with such exactions and grievances, that the inhabitants are scarce able to pay the tributes even by the sale of their children. Hence a number of proprietors in the island, relinquishing the Roman government, are reduced to put themselves under the protection of the Lombards. For what more grievous oppression can they suffer from the barbarians, than to be obliged to sell their children ?—I know that the emperor will say, that the whole produce of the revenue in these islands is applied to the support and defence of Italy. Be it so ; but a divine blessing ought not to be expected to attend the gains of sin." He wrote again to the empress, against the pride of John, and speaks superstitiously on the merits of St. Peter, while he laments his own unworthiness. Twenty-seven years, he observes, the Roman church had suffered from the desolation of the Lombards ; and its daily expenses, partly on account of the war, and partly in the support of the indigent, were incredibly great.

Gregory had also other just causes of complaint against the emperor. Property, he saw, was entirely fluctuating and insecure on account of oppressive exactions, insidious proceedings in wills, and various artifices employed by the emperor's ministers.* These evils were constantly practised in Italy, and Gregory had deplored them in vain.

Evagrius delivers a very pompous encomium on the character of Mauritius.† But his praise is declamatory and vague, and Mauritius was then living. After all due allowances made on account of the emperor's distance from Italy, it is impossible to vindicate his conduct. He wanted not military virtues, and had some sense of religion. But avarice was the predominant feature of his

character ; and how much this vice prevails to eclipse all laudible qualities in a man, was never more illustrated than in the conduct of Mauritius. Chagan, king of the Avares, a Scythian nation on the banks of the Danube, offered, for a ransom, to liberate some thousands of prisoners. He even proposed to do it at a low price ; but Mauritius would not part with his money, and the barbarian in a rage massacred all his prisoners. Mauritius, though covetous, was not inhuman : he was struck with horror at the news, and besought God, that his punishment might be in this life, not in the next. His prayer was answered in the former part of it undoubtedly, and I hope also in the latter. As he had alienated the affections of his soldiers by his refusal to supply their wants, they elevated Phocas, a centurian, to the Imperial throne. Mauritius fled, but was seized, and unhumanly murdered with his wife and family. Five of his sons were slain in his sight before he himself received the fatal stroke. The little spark of divine grace, which for years seems to have maintained a dubious existence in a heart by nature extremely avaricious, was fanned into a flame by the keen blast of wholesome affliction. Mauritius bore the scene with silent resignation, repeating only, as each of his children was butchered, " Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true are thy judgments." A nurse, who took care of his youngest son, placed her own in its room : Mauritius detecting the generous fraud, discovered it to the executioners, and prevented its effect.—This is a transaction of civil history, but it falls in with our plan. The great faults of one, who had a latent spark of grace within him, were punished in this life by the wickedness of the monster Phocas, and the story deserves to be remembered as a beacon to warn professors of godliness against the love of the world. Mauritius seems to have profited abundantly by the scourge, and to have died in such a frame of mind as belongs only to a christian. We are not apt to be aware of the advantages which society receives from Christianity. Let us suppose this emperor to have been totally unacquainted with, or entirely averse to Christian principles. How immensely more pernicious his natural disposition would have been, unchecked internally, as well as externally, can scarce be conceived.

The images of Phocas and of his wife Leontia, were sent to Rome, and received with much respect by the people, and by Gregory himself. It cannot be supposed, that the bishop of Rome could be acquainted with the personal character of Phocas, who was in truth a man of extraordinary wickedness ; and the late transactions at Constantinople would naturally be misrepresented to him in the accounts transmitted thence. Prejudiced as he was against Mauritius, and

* Gregory was much afflicted to find, that almost all the peasants of the island were still idolaters. Januarius, bishop of Cagliari, was indolent ; the slaves belonging to his own church were idolaters ; the other bishops of the province were equally negligent. Hospiton, the chief of the barbarians, had, however, received the gospel ; and to him Gregory recommended his missionaries, exhorting him to exert himself for the salvation of his countrymen. Gregory rebuked Januarius for his neglect of discipline in general, though he had exercised it severely in one instance, in which he had met with a personal affront. The world is still the same ; I could wish that what has been mentioned, did not give just cause to the reader, to recollect not only the state of religion in the West Indies, but nearer at home, in Ireland, in which, notwithstanding there are such a number of bishoprics and churches, a superstitious and idolatrous religion prevails to this day.

† B. XI. Ep. 36.

‡ Toward the close of his history.

willing to hope better things from the new emperor, he wrote him a congratulatory letter, in which he studiously avoided saying any thing on the detail of circumstances, of which he must have been very insufficiently informed, and dwelt on that which was certain, namely, the adorable hand of Divine Providence in changing the times, and in transferring kingdoms, as he pleases. He exults in the prospect which he had too eagerly formed of a wise, just, and pious administration. He modestly hints at the great abuses of the late government, and exhorts Phocas to redress them, reminding him, "that a Roman emperor commands freemen, and not slaves."² Such is the substance of his letter, in which I see nothing unworthy of the piety and patriotism of Gregory, but much of his wonted care for the good of the church and the public.

Gregory wrote again to Phocas, to apologise for the want of a deacon, who should reside at Constantinople. Phocas had complained to him of this, and invited him to send one. The bishop informed him, that the severity of the late government had deterred all clergymen from going thither. But, as he now hoped better things, he sent him a person whom he recommended to his protection. He beseeches Phocas to listen to his relation of facts, as he would thence learn more distinctly the miseries which Italy had sustained without redress, *forty-three years, from the Lombards.*³ Is it at all surprising, that this language should be used by a man who sincerely loved his country, and knew little of the new emperor; who probably had received a false account of his actions and character, and who had so long been, on Christian principles, both patient and loyal to an oppressive government?

In another letter to Leontia he is not to be excused from the charge of an unhappy superstition. He talks of Peter the Apostle, reminds her of the scripture-text, on the perverted use of which hangs the whole structure of the papacy,⁴ and of his intercession in heaven. He prays, that she and her husband may be endowed with princely virtues, and expresses, I will not say with flattery, but with an expectation much too sanguine, his hopes of the blessings of the new administration.

Phocas was displeased with Cyriacus, the bishop of Constantinople, because he had generously interested himself in favour of the remaining branches of Mauritius's family; and while he courted the favour of Gregory, and of the Romans at a distance, he tyrannized at home in an uncommon manner. But Gregory died the next year after Phocas's promotion, and had not, probably, time

enough to know his genuine character, and was himself also so bowed down with pains and infirmities, that he was unable to answer a letter of Theudelinda, queen of the Lombards. He had promised to do it, if his health was restored; but he grew less and less capable of business till he died. Had health and opportunity permitted, the vigour and piety of his character give me no room to doubt, that he would have rebuked the Roman tyrant in such a manner, as to have quite silenced the accusations, which, on this account, have been thrown upon him. That he should have opposed the usurpation of Phocas, will not be expected from those who consider the views of the primitive Christians, who intermeddled not with politics; but he, who plainly rebuked Mauritius, would certainly not have spared his successor, whose conduct was far more blameable.⁵

CHAPTER VII.

GREGORY'S CONDUCT WITH RESPECT TO ENGLAND.

THIS also has been a source of much accusation against the Roman prelate. Protestant writers, in their zeal against popery, have censured his domineering spirit with acrimony, as if the British Christians had been protestants, and the Roman Christians papists, accurately speaking. But Gregory was no pope, nor had the Britons separated from the general church, and formed a purer establishment of their own. Superstition and ecclesiastical power, in the excess, adhered indeed to the conduct of the Roman prelate, as the fault of the age, not of his temper; and if he had perfectly avoided the fashionable evils of his time, he would have been, I had almost said, more than human. But the ideas, peculiarly popish, were not yet matured in the churches. Dissenting writers, I find, have been seduced by the same sort of prejudices as divines of the Church of England, and it is curious to observe, how different writers can find in the features of the British Church, the very figure of their own denomination. I ought to profit by the mistakes of others; that is, to forget my own times and connections; to transplant myself into the age of which I write; to make liberal allowances for its customs and prejudices, and to enable the reader, from facts themselves, to form his own judgment.

For near a century and a half the gospel

¹ Phocas took away the title of universal bishop from the prelate of Constantinople, and granted it to Boniface III. the next successor but one to Gregory. After Phocas's death, the prelate of the East re-assumed the title. The two bishops each preserved it, and with equal ambition strove for the pre-eminence. For Gregory, who abhorred all views of secular ambition, had now departed this life.

² B. XI. Ep. 36.

³ B. XI. Ep. 43.

⁴ Matt. xvi. 18.

of Christ had been declining in Britain, and for the greatest part of that time had been, as we have seen, confined to Wales and Cornwall, or to the mountains of Scotland. Ireland too still preserved something of the light, while the Angles or Saxons, our ancestors, destroyed every evangelical appearance in the heart of the island. No barbarians were ever more ferocious or more idolatrous; and the Britons, who escaped their ravages, oppressed one another with civil broils. Being favoured with some cessation from their wars with the Saxons, they lost by degrees all traces of former piety, though the form of Christianity still remained. One proof among others, which the old historian Gildas gives of their entire want of Christian zeal, is, that they took not the least pains for the conversion of the Saxons. Seven Saxon kingdoms, called the Heptarchy, were now formed, altogether ignorant and idolatrous, while the few British churches were inattentive to the propagation of christian truth in the island. And the Saxons continued, some of them for a century, others more than two centuries, immersed in darkness.⁴

One cannot form any agreeable idea either of the piety or of the knowledge of the British christians, from these circumstances. Nor are the excuses, which our protestant historians are inclined to make for their want of zeal, at all satisfactory. It has been said that, "The hostilities of the Angles would make such attempts to be arduous;" but let the reader only reflect how such difficulties were surmounted by zealous and charitable christians in former ages.* I cannot but therefore subscribe to the testimony of our ancient historians,† "that much worthier pastors were sent by the divine goodness, through whom, those, whom God had fore-known, might believe to salvation." A testimony as evangelical in its language, as it is solid in fact.

It was about 150 years after the arrival of the Saxons in Britain, that Gregory sent his famous mission into our island, toward the close of the sixth century. It was no sudden thought, but the effect of much deliberation. Even before his consecration at Rome, walking one day in the forum, he saw some very handsome youths exposed to sale. Asking of what country they were, he was informed they were of the island of Britain. "Are the inhabitants of that island Christians or Pagans?" They are Pagans, was the reply. Alas! said he, deeply sighing, that the prince of darkness should possess countenances so luminous, and that so fair a front should carry minds destitute of eternal grace. What is the name of the nation? Angli, it

was said. "In truth they have angelic countenances, and it is a pity they should not be co-heirs with angels in heaven. What is the province from which they come?" Deira, that is, Northumberland, he was told. It is well, said he, De ira, snatched from the wrath of God, and called to the mercy of Christ. "What is the name of their king?" Ella, was the answer. Playing upon the name, "Alleluia should be sung to God in those regions."⁴ Impressed with the importance of the object, he earnestly entreated the then Roman bishop to send a mission to the island, offering himself as one ready for the task. Nothing but the officious benevolence of the Roman citizens prevented the work at that time. Gregory was too much beloved at Rome, to be allowed to leave it.

It was the character of Gregory to pursue with unwearied attention any plan or scheme of piety or discipline, which he had once conceived. After his consecration, in the year 595, he directed a presbyter, whom he had sent into France, to instruct some young Saxons of seventeen or eighteen years of age, in christianity. He intended to prepare them for the mission into our island; and in the year 597 he actually sent missionaries thither. They were a number of monks, at the head of whom was one named Augustine. In obedience to Gregory's directions, they proceeded on their journey; but their hearts failed them, when they reflected on the difficulties and dangers to which they thought themselves likely to be exposed. The faith and zeal and simplicity of a christian missionary were at this time grown rare in the world; and Augustine was sent back by the rest to entreat Gregory to discharge them from the service. The prelate wrote exhortatory letters, advising them to proceed in confidence of divine aid. He informed them, that it had been better not to have begun a good work, than to recede from it afterwards. He entreated them not to be deterred by the labour of the journey, nor by the breath of malevolence. He set before them the heavenly prospects, and prayed that he himself might see the fruit of their labour in the eternal country. For though, says he, I cannot labour with you, may I at the same time be found in the joy of retribution, because I am willing to labour! Nor did he neglect any means proper to accommodate the missionaries: he recommended them to the attention of Etherius, bishop of Arles, and secured them all the assistance in France, that might expedite

⁴ Bede.

[†] See Warner's Eccl. Hist. toward the beginning.

⁴ Bede.

⁴ I leave to fastidious sceptics, such as the historian Hume, to sneer at Gregory's want of taste in these several allusions. The candid reader will impute them to the times, not to the man; and the devout and charitable will adore the goodness of God, which was beginning to provide such precious benefits for our country; benefits, which call for ceaseless gratitude to the Author of all good, and should endure the memory of the Roman prelate to our latest posterity.

their passage into Britain, and every convenience which they needed. Thus animated, they arrived in Britain.

There was, however, a remarkable concurrence of providential circumstances which facilitated the work, and gave it a more expeditious success than might have been expected from appearances. It is very observable, how much the Lord has made use of women in the propagation of the gospel among idolaters. To former instances of this sort, we must add, that two queens were concerned in this work, one of whom was the infamous Brunehaut, whose correspondence with Gregory has been noticed. Desirous to cover her vices by the appearance of religion, she had, at Gregory's request, given the missionaries every possible assistance. The other, a character on whom the mind will dwell with pleasure, was Bertha, the only daughter of Caribert, king of Paris, a descendant of Clovis. She had been married to Ethelbert in his father's lifetime, who was now king of Kent, and one of the most wise and powerful of the Saxon princes. He had not been allowed to marry the French princess, but on the express stipulation, that she should be permitted to make free profession of christianity, in which she had been educated. She brought over with her a French bishop to the court of Dorobernium, now Canterbury. Her principles were firm and sound: her conduct was worthy of the christian name; and her influence over her husband was considerable. Her zealous piety was not inferior to that of the queen Clovis, which had been attended with such happy consequences in France; and every thing conspired to favour the missionaries.

Ethelbert assigned Augustine a habitation in the isle of Thanet. Here he remained at first with his associates, who were nearly forty. By the direction of Gregory, they had taken with them French interpreters, by whose means they informed the king, that they were come from Rome,¹ and brought him the best tidings in the world, eternal life to those who received them, and the endless enjoyment of life with the living and true God. After some days, Ethelbert paid them a visit; but being apprehensive of enchantments, he took care to receive them in the open air, where he thought he should be safer than in a house. The missionaries met him, singing litanies for their own salvation, and that of those for whose sake they came thither.² Sitting down by the king's direction, they preached to him and his attendants the word of life. I cannot produce the smallest extract of the sermon; but that it explained the fundamentals, at least, of

the gospel, there seems no reason to doubt. One may form some idea of it by the king's answer, which was to this effect: "They are fine words and promises which ye bring, but because they are new and uncertain, I cannot afford my assent to them, nor relinquish those things which for so long a time I have observed with all the English nation. But as ye are come hither from a great distance, and as I seem to discover that ye are willing to communicate to us those things which ye believe to be true and most excellent, we are not willing to disturb you, but rather to receive you in a friendly manner, and to afford you things necessary for your support: not do we hinder you from uniting all, whom ye can persuade by preaching, to the faith of your religion." He gave them a mansion in the royal city of Canterbury, with all necessary accommodations, and the license of preaching the word. As they approached the city, they sang in concert this litany: We pray thee, O Lord, in all thy mercy, that thine anger and thy fury may be removed from this city, and from thy holy house, because we have sinned. Alleuia.

Certainly the human mind was in a debased and childish state at this time throughout a great part of the world: It had long been sinking in its powers and taste; and while paganism existed in the Roman empire, the heathen philosophers and orators appear no way superior to christian authors and pastors in the use and cultivation of the understanding. Such men as Gregory and his missionaries should not be compared with Cicero and Demosthenes, but with their own contemporaries; and had this been done by writers who treat them with perfect contempt, the injustice of that contempt would have appeared. It must be expected that the work of divine grace in different ages, will, in its effects and manifestations, exhibit the complexion and colour of the objects with which it is surrounded. The subtlety of Satan will not fail to take every possible advantage of this circumstance, and I can believe that even more superstitions than those recorded by Bede attended the labours of the Roman missionaries. In our own times of refinement, evils far more plausible, but not less pernicious, accompany the same salutary work. I have not, however, observed any thing idolatrous, or otherwise directly subversive of Christianity, to have yet prevailed in any of the fashionable superstitions. These things being premised, let us consider what most probably was the doctrine preached by Augustine; I say probably, since the wretched narratives from which I draw my information have given no account. That eternal salvation and forgiveness of sin by

¹ Bede, B. I. Ep. 25, &c.

² As I write not the history of superstition, but of Christian religion, I think not myself obliged to copy

all the accounts I meet with in ancient records which relate to the former. Justice, in the extreme, has been done to them by other writers.

the blood of the Lamb, was his capital doctrine, seems evident in a great measure from Ethelbert's observation of the good news which they brought. I may still more confidently say, that his sermon was not a system of moral duties. For how could that be called good news? All the difficulty with Ethelbert was, to believe what they promised; the very same difficulty which strikes all unrenewed minds at the first hearing of the gospel. And when to this we add what we certainly know of Gregory's sentiments, and consider Augustine as preaching according to his views, the evidence seems to rise even beyond probability. Ethelbert, a prudent and sensible prince, though, as yet at least, by no means convinced of the truth of christianity, sees no suspicious mask in the language and conduct of the preachers. The air of genuine sincerity is simple and above the possibility of imitation. Candid and intelligent minds perceive it almost intuitively. The king of Kent could see no selfish motive that was likely to influence these men. They spoke with an earnestness that showed their own conviction of the excellency of their doctrine, and their desire of profiting their fellow-creatures. Not an atom of gain was to be acquired to the see of Rome; the whole mission was disinterested. Hence the candid prince was induced to give them countenance; and the gospel appears to have been preached, and that with plainness and sincerity, by the missionaries.

Their conduct at Canterbury was correspondent to these beginnings. They prayed, fasted, watched, preached the word of life to all, as opportunity served: they lived as men above the world: received nothing from those whom they taught, except necessities: they practised what they taught, and showed a readiness to suffer, or even to die, for the truth which they preached. Some believed and were baptized, admiring their innocent lives, and tasting the sweetness of their doctrine. Near the city there was an old church, built in the times of the Romans, in which queen Bertha was wont to pray. In this the missionaries first held their assemblies, sang, prayed, preached, and baptized, till, the king himself being converted to the faith,¹ they obtained a larger license of preaching every where, and of building or repairing churches. When he himself, among others, delighted with the holiness of their lives, and the preciousness of gospel promises confirmed by many miracles, believed and was baptized, numbers crowded to hear, and received the word. The king, congratulating the new converts, declared

that he would compel no man to become a christian; however he embraced those who did so with a more intimate affection as fellow-heirs of the grace of life. For the missionaries had taught him, that the service of Christ ought to be voluntary, not compulsive. He now gave to them a settlement in Canterbury, suited to their station, with all necessary accommodations.

Augustine returning into France, received ordination, as the archbishop of the English nation, from the bishop of Arles, and returning into Britain, sent Laurentius the presbyter, and Peter the monk, to acquaint Gregory with his success, and to receive answers to various questions. To his inquiries concerning the maintenance of the clergy, Gregory answered, that the donations, made to the church were, by the customs of the Roman See, divided into four portions, one for the bishop and his family to support hospitality, a second to the clergy, a third to the poor, a fourth to the reparation of churches: that as the pastors were all monks, they ought to live in common, with a remarkable exception; which proves that the absolute prohibition of marriage, one of the marks of Antichrist,² was not yet enjoined the clergy, namely, that those of them who preferred the marriage state, might be allowed to marry, and receive their maintenance out of the monastery. To another question, which related to the diversity of customs and liturgies in different churches, the answer of Gregory was liberal; namely, that the new bishop was not bound to follow the precedent of Rome, but that he might select whatever parts or rules appeared the most eligible, and best adapted to promote the piety of the infant church of England, and compose them into a system for its use. A number of other questions and answers are recorded likewise, too uninteresting to deserve a place here.³ Yet amidst the childish superstition of the times, the enlightened mind of Gregory appears; and his occasional comment on St. Paul's words, concerning the law in his members warring against the law of his mind, in which the bishop understands the Apostle as describing himself to be free and enlaved at the same time, with a double respect to his natural and spiritual state, evinces the solidity of his evangelical knowledge.

Augustine having intimated, that the harvest was plenteous, but that the labourers were few, Gregory sent him more missionaries, and directed him to constitute a bishop at York, who might have other subordinate bishops; yet, in such a manner, that Augustine of Canterbury should be metropolitan of all England. Such were the rudiments of the English church. Gregory has been

¹ I hope Bede's expression (B. I. Ep. 26.), is true in the proper sense of the words.

² What shall be said concerning these miracles? The credulity of that age should not lead one to deny all that is said of them. It was a new scene: Evangelists were preaching among pagans. Certain it is, that

every one concerned in those scenes believed their reality.

³ I Tim. iv.

⁴ Bede, B. I. C. 27

sensured for being too eager in settling a plan of ecclesiastical government for places as yet not in the least evangelized: and it must be owned, that this extreme care of subordination and uniformity does seem premature; but the spirit of the times favoured such hasty external institutions.

Gregory thought long and deeply of this his favourite infant church; and wrote to Mellitus, one of the missionaries going to Britain, on account of the fruits of his meditations; which were,⁹ that the idol-temples being purged of their uncleanness, should be converted into churches for the use of the natives, in which they might worship God, according to the gospel. And reflecting that they had been wont to sacrifice to demons, and in their sacrifices to indulge themselves in feasts, he directs that, setting apart all sacrifices, and whatever was connected with idolatry, they might be allowed on the day of the church's dedication, or on the martyrdom of Saints, to make booths for themselves in the neighbourhood of the churches, and enjoy themselves in temperate banquets. This latter direction appears dangerous: the reason he assigns for it is, that the English, if they found their usual entertainments to be altogether prohibited, might be induced to relapse into idolatry. I cannot compare Gregory's compliances to the jesuitical artifices practised in after ages among the Chinese, because it appears that idolatry was absolutely prohibited, and the real Christian religion taught in Britain: but a man who knew human nature so well as this bishop did, might have foreseen the practical excesses which his license would encourage, and should have committed to God himself the success of his own cause among the English.

Hearing from Augustine of his miraculous powers, Gregory, who seems to have entertained no doubt of their reality, cautions him excellently against pride and presumption on their account, informs him that they were given him more for the sake of the new converts than of himself, and teaches him the all-important lesson of humility. He wrote also to Ethelbert, to congratulate, instruct, and exhort him, setting before him the example of the great Constantine, and pressing him to extend the propagation of the gospel.¹ His zeal was much animated by the near prospect which he himself had of the end of

the world, and of which he failed not to inform the king of Kent.² The latter reigned fifty years, and died in 616. As a statesman he was great, as a christian greater still. And few princes in any age were richer blessings to their subjects than Ethelbert and Bertha.

But this fine gold was not without some alloy! Before these events there existed in Wales particularly, a British church. Augustine, willing to establish a uniformity of discipline and customs in the island, invited the Welsh bishops to a conference, and began to admonish them to enter into christian peace and concord, that with hearts united they might join in evangelizing the pagans. The Britons observed Easter at a season different from that of the Roman Church, and did many other things contrary to her customs. The conference proved fruitless; the Britons would hearken to no prayers or exhortations; and Augustine in the close had recourse to a miraculous sign.³ A blind man was introduced to be healed. We are told that the Britons had no success: but that Augustine's prayers were heard, and his sight was restored. The Britons were induced to confess, that Augustine was sent of God, but pleaded the obstinacy of their people, as a reason for their non-compliance.—A second synod was appointed, attended by seven British bishops, and many of their learned men, belonging to the famous monastery at Bangor, of which Dinoh was at that time the abbot. Before these came to the synod, they asked the advice of a person of reputed sanctity, whether they should give up their own traditions on the authority of Augustine or not. Let humility said he, be the test, and if you find, when you come to the synod, that he rises up to you at your approach, obey him; if not, let him be despised by you. On so precarious an evidence, it seems, did he rest the proof of humility. It happened, that Augustine continued sit-

appear in Gregory's letter to Ethelbert. But he, like Theodosius, directed that the worship of idols should be destroyed. Men were allowed to remain aloof all their days from Christianity, if they pleased. Forced conversions, like those of popery in after ages, were as yet unknown, and this other mark of Antichrist, persecution, as yet existed not in the church. It is very possible that the indifferent spirit of our times may be disgusted with that part of the conduct of Theodosius and Gregory, which related to the destruction of idols, and call it persecution. Be it so: I have (in Chap. xvi. Cent. iv.) examined this point with as much exactness as I can. But let not men of sincere piety and fervent charity for the good of souls, be represented as if they were hypocritical in their moderation at first, and as if they intended to establish tyranny afterwards. Their plan was, whether it be agreeable to present reigning maxims or not, to compel no man to receive Christianity, and at the same time to render the practice of idolatry impracticable. I believe many, who have written against them as persecutors, have not distinctly understood this distinction. All I contend for here is this, they acted consistently and uprightly.

¹ Gregory had already written to queen Bertha, and stimulated her zeal to labour for the conversion of her husband.—Id. C. 32.

² Bed. B. II. C. 2.

⁹ Bede, B. I. C. 30.

¹ Hume (Chap. I. of his History of England) represents this exhortation to extend the propagation of the Gospel as inconsistent with the conduct of Augustine, "who had thought proper in the commencement of his mission, to assume the appearance of the greatest lenity." Thus it is that men, more malignant than intelligent in Christian history, pervert facts, and represent pious men as hypocritical in their moderate conduct. The truth is, neither Constantine, nor Theodosius, nor Gregory, nor any of the ancients, ever compelled any man to become a Christian, either in the beginning or progress of religion. Nor does any thing of the kind

ting on their arrival, which might easily have taken place without any intentional insult; the Britons were however incensed, and would hearken to no terms of reconciliation. Augustine proposed to them to agree with him only in three things, leaving other points of difference undecided, namely, to observe Easter at the same time with the rest of the christian world, to administer baptism after the Roman manner, and to join with Augustine in preaching the gospel to the English. In all other things, says he, we will bear you with patience. The Britons were inexorable, and refused to acknowledge his authority. "If you will not have peace with brethren, said the archbishop of Canterbury, roused at length into an unbecoming warmth, you will have war with enemies; and if you will not preach to the English the way of life, you will suffer death at their hands." It happened afterwards, that, in an invasion of the Pagan Saxons of the North, the Bangorian monks were cruelly destroyed, though long after the death of Augustine. He died in peaceable possession of the See of Canterbury, after having lived to see the gospel propagated with increasing success. He ordained Mellitus and Justus bishops; London was brought into the pale of the church, and the southern parts of the island found the benefit of his labours, and of those of his auxiliaries.

I shall close the story of English affairs with the death of Augustine, which happened early in the 7th century. And as the ground I am now upon has been disputed, I am willing to lay open all the information which antiquity can give us. Let us hear some other accounts of these transactions.

Writers, who have been studious of the honour of our country, tell us, that when Augustine came into England, he found seven bishops and an archbishop supplied with godly governors and abbots, and that the church was in goodly order, at Bangor particularly: that Dinoth the abbot showed Augustine that they owed him no subjection: that their bishops had been independent of Rome: that the bishops of Rome had no more right to their obedience than other christians had, and that the bishop of Caerleon upon Usk was their proper superior,[†] and that in revenge for this honest assertion of their independency, the Kentish king procured the invasion and slaughter of the British monks mentioned above.

How christianity was afterwards propagated in our island, and how the disputes between the Roman and British churches terminated, will properly fall under our consideration hereafter. In the mean time, the injustice of a certain writer[‡] to the memory

of Gregory, in accusing him of exercising tyranny over the British Church, is very glaring. We have, by an early association of ideas, been so habituated to condemn every thing that is Roman in religion, that we are not easily open to conviction on this subject. It should, however, be remembered, that not the least revenue could accrue to Gregory from the conversion of Britain; nor did he suggest or intimate any lucrative plan, directly or indirectly. If there were any improper steps taken, they must not be charged to a selfish or interested spirit, such as that which has since animated the papacy. The doctrines avowedly and earnestly taught by Gregory and his followers, were the doctrines of Grace; and though no account of the faith of the Welsh monks is given us, there is great reason, on account of the Pelagian leaven of our island, to fear it was not so truly christian as that of Gregory. That they were uncharitable, appears incontestable from their neglect of the Saxon pagans, and their obstinate refusal to hearken to any advice on that head. And the reader has already had a view of their manners, very different from the flattering account of Galfridus. The extent however of the British Church, before the arrival of Augustine, was so inconsiderable, that when Gregory planned the hierarchy for this island, it is probable he knew little of the very existence of such a church. The fault of ambitious encroachment must, therefore, be laid to Augustine. Seduced he undoubtedly was, according to the common superstition of the age, by an excessive zeal for uniformity. And that admirable method of uniting zeal for establishments with a spirit of toleration, which was discovered towards the close of the last century, was as yet unknown. The Britons had been independent, and they had a right to continue so; but I believe, from all appearances, that Augustine wished them to form a connection with the Romans from charitable views.

What could be the meaning of his wishing the Britons to baptize after the Roman manner? This question has exercised the critical talents of authors. After all, as baptism by trinal immersion was then the Roman mode, this seems to give the most natural account of the circumstance.

The charge of Galfridus, in accusing the Romans of employing the pagans to murder the British, is too absurd to merit any serious notice. Augustine died long before it happened. Gregory himself was deceased before the controversies between Augustine and Dinoth took place. He has been accused of extreme inconsistency, in being imperious towards heretics, and indulgent towards pagans[†] and Jews. But a more exact acquaintance with cases would enable men to form a

[†] Galfridus Monomachus, B. IV. C. 12. See Nichols on the Common Prayer.

[‡] Bower's Lives of Popes, Vol. II. Gregory.

[†] Bower.

better judgment. Gregory, like all real good men, was averse to use violent methods in proselyting; he knew that conversion, if sincere, must be voluntary. But when men once have been received into the christian pale, the same zeal which laboured for their conversion, is studious for their uniform attachment to christian fundamentals. It was no breach of charity in Gregory to attempt to hinder the promotion of a Donatist in the christian church in Africa, and such an attempt was very consistent with that charity which forbade the persecution of Jews.

On the whole, Gregory's conduct with respect to our island appears one of the most shining efforts of christian charity. His missionaries, in general, acted landably; and the real establishment of christianity was, under God, effected by their means. There was a stain of rivalry and jealousy, as we have seen, which appeared in their conduct; but they were men.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WORKS OF GREGORY.

THIS great patriarch, worn out at length with labours and diseases, slept in Jesus in the year 604,* after he had enjoyed, shall I say—or endured his bishopric thirteen years and six months. No man in any age ever gave himself up more sincerely to the service of God, and the benefit of his fellow creatures. Power in him was a voluntary servitude, undertaken not for himself, but for all the world. Even the growth of superstition, with which he was strongly infected, while it secured to him the cheerful obedience of the laity, contributed nothing to his ease or secular emolument. The belief of the Roman bishop's succession to Peter, which he found to be prevalent in Europe, was accidentally strengthened by his eminent piety and his laborious virtues. Had he even been disposed to have extended his authority to much greater lengths, all the world would have been prone to submit to his decrees; so firmly was the opinion of his integrity established among men. His conscience, however, would not suffer him to carry any thing farther than precedents had sanctioned; and who, especially in an age of superstitious credulity, could doubt the justice of his pretensions, while the pre-eminence was so painful, so disinterested, and so beneficially exerted?

For I cannot persuade myself to call him Pope. He pretended not to any thing like infallibility, nor did he ever attempt any

thing like a secular domination. The seeds of Antichrist were vigorously shooting indeed; and the reputation of Gregory doubtless contributed much to mature the poisonous plant. But idolatry, spiritual tyranny, and the doctrine of the merit of works, the three discriminating marks of the papacy, had, as yet, no settled establishment at Rome. Had this man lived in our age, he would doubtless have beheld, with astonishment, on the one hand the worldly spirit of many christian pastors so called, and on the other the impiety of numerous infidels who are continually railing against the religious. His mind, naturally vigorous, industrious and active, would doubtless have shaken off the gloom and credulity of superstition; but he would have been amazed to hear the pompous pretences to philosophy, in which every juvenile scologist indulges himself. He would have examined the fruits, and have been at a loss to conceive with what propriety the term philosopher could be applied to sceptics, blasphemers, atheists, levellers, and sensualists. He would, as a bishop, have tried what could be done to stem the torrent, and have exerted in the way of discipline, which was his peculiar talent, his usual address, mildness and resolution. He would have mourned over his beloved England,[†] if he had seen her so absurdly enslaved to ideas of mistaken liberty, as to spurn at decent rules of discipline, and to discountenance, as tyranny, godly attempts to introduce and support them. He would have been ready to say, "this people are enemies to their own good;" he would have pitied them, wept, and consoled himself with his usual refuge, the views of a better world, and have done what good was still in his power, by the example of a holy life, by painful preaching, and by pious writings.

Of these last we have many still extant. He particularly excelled in devotional composition. Litanies had been used in the West before his time, in calamitous seasons, as the plague or famine. These were collected, and the choicest parts selected from them, and compiled, through the care of Gregory, into one large litany, not much different from that used by the church of England at this day. It was much corrupted afterwards in the popish times, was reformed by Hermannus, archbishop of Cologne, in the days of Luther, and afterwards improved by our reformers.

But the church of England is not only indebted to Gregory for the Litany. In his Sacramentary he embodied the collects of the

* The gratitude of Bede has (B. II. C. I. *See Hist.*) led him to apply to Gregory the words of St. Paul in regard to the Corinthians. As an Englishman, who felt himself much obliged, he says, the seal of his apostleship are we in the Lord. The testimony of antiquity to Gregory's beneficent piety toward this island is uniform.

ancient church, and improved old, or made new ones. Gelasius, before him, had appointed public prayers, composed by himself or others. These were all placed in the offices by Gregory. And by a comparison of our Book of Common Prayer with his Sacramentary, it is evident, that almost all the collects for Sundays, and the principal festivals in the Church of England, were taken out of the latter. To me it appears to be an advantage, that our reformers followed antiquity so much in the work. The purification of the ancient services from the corrupt and idolatrous mixtures of popery, was as strong an indication of their judgment as the composition of prayers altogether new could have been, which, however, they scrupled not to introduce in various parts of the Liturgy. From the brief account I have given, it appears that the service of the church is far more ancient than the Roman Missal, properly speaking. And whoever has attended to the superlative simplicity, fervour, and energy of the prayers, will have no hesitation in concluding, that they must, the collects particularly, have been composed in a time of true evangelical light and godliness. It is impossible indeed to say, how early some parts of the Liturgy were written; but doubtless they are of very high antiquity. Many persons, in dark times, and under the disadvantage of slothful ignorant pastors, have been enlightened and nourished through their medium, and not a few, I trust, of my readers can justly confess with me, how much their devotion has been assisted by the public use of them. Let any unprejudiced person compare with the Liturgy several forms of prayer composed in modern times, and he will find an unctious to attend the former, of which the latter is destitute. The present age is certainly much tainted, in general, with a sceptical, philosophic spirit, which in its nature is not favourable to the production of devotional compositions.

The historical evidence hence resulting of the religious spirit of the times is great. The Western Church was far from being wholly corrupt in the close of the sixth century.* The doctrines of grace revived by Augustine were still predominant: divine life was much clogged indeed with the asthma of superstition; but its pulse was yet vigorous. I close this digression, if it may be called one, with remarking, that the continued use of these liturgies in the churches of the West, demonstrates the concurrent testimony of antiquity, in favour of evangelical doctrine.

Of Gregory's epistles nothing more is

needful to be added to the numerous extracts from them, which have supplied me with materials for his history.

His exposition of the book of Job is very voluminous. In a letter to Leander prefixed to it, he speaks of the tripartite sense, according to the ideas of Augustine, with sufficient justness and accuracy; yet through fondness for system he carries his point too far, so as to destroy sometimes the literal sense, after the vicious mode of Origen. We may believe him, when he describes the correspondence of the subject to his own bodily afflictions; and he frankly owns his neglect of language and style. Few readers will be tempted to search the work throughout, on account of the heaviness of his manner, and the total want of elegance. Yet piety and humility are every where predominant; and though it can by no means be called a just commentary on the book of Job, he in general avoids deviations from the analogy of faith, by the evangelical purity of his frame and temper, and he had, I doubt not, real communion with God in the work. Let us hear his humble confession at the close: it deserves the serious notice of authors, and in that most salutary science of self-knowledge demonstrates a proficiency worthy of a follower of Augustine.

"Having finished my work, I see I must return to myself. The human mind is frequently bewildered, even when it attempts to speak correctly. For while we study propriety of language, we are drawn out of ourselves and are apt to lose simplicity. From speaking in public let me return to the court of the heart; let me call my thoughts to a serious consultation with a view to discern myself, that I may observe whether I have spoken evil inadvertently, or good in a wrong spirit. For then only is real good spoken in a right spirit, when we mean by it to please him alone, from whom we receive it. I am not conscious of having said evil; yet I will not maintain that I am absolutely innocent in this respect. The good which I have spoken I have received from above, and it is less good, through my sinfulness. For, averting my contemplation from words and sentences, the leaves and branches, and narrowly inspecting the root of my intention, I know that I meant earnestly to please God: but the desire of human praise insensibly mixes with this intention. I discover this slowly and afterwards, and find that the execution corresponds not with the first intention. While we really mean to please God at first, the love of human praise steals into the mind, and overtakes and accompanies the pure design; as in eating, what was begun through necessity and in innocence, terminates too often in excess. If we are strictly examined by the divine Judge, how can we escape? our evils

* Nicholls on B. of Com. Pray.

† That beautiful and sublime ode, called Te Deum, ascribed, though not with certainty, to Ambrose, was incessantly used in the church before the middle of the sixth century.

are our own without mixture, and our good things are defiled with impurity. What I feel within, I lay open to my reader. In expounding I have not concealed what I think; in confessing I hide not what I suffer.—I beg every reader to pray for me. If the value of his prayers and of my exposition be compared, he will have the advantage. He receives from me only words; but repays me with tears of supplication."

His pastoral care is a monument of the author's intense seriousness. I have already observed in many christian pastors, and in Gregory as eminently as in most, a very strong sense of the importance of the clerical office, which rebukes the presumption of moderns more keenly than any words of mine can do. With the ancients scarce any person, however qualified, seemed adequate to the cure of souls; with us every stripling undertakes it without fear or hesitation. The treatise itself deserves to be read throughout by every candidate for the pastoral office. I know not how to select any parts of it particularly, and its brevity forbids and discourages all attempts at abridgment."

The exposition of the Canticles is worthy of the godly spirit of Gregory. I shall hazard a quotation or two, which I doubt not will meet the sensations of minds acquainted spiritually with Jesus Christ, however the profane may ridicule, and the phlegmatic may censure. It is worth while to show, that a spirit of union with Christ has ever been felt in his church.

On the first verse of the Canticles he says, "Let him whom I love above all, nay alone, let him come to me, that he may touch me with the sweetness of his inspiration. For when I feel his influence, I leave myself by a sudden change, and being melted am transformed into his likeness. The holy mind is disgusted with all things which it feels from the body, and desires to become altogether spiritual; and while sensual objects murmur around, it flies into spiritual things, and desires to hide itself in them. Therefore it desires the loving-kindness of the Lord, because without it, it feels no power to approach him."

On the words, "draw me, we will run after thee," he observes, "Divine grace prevents us. He, who is drawn, runs, because being strengthened by divine love, he passes over all obstacles."

The defective taste and learning of his age forbid us to expect any very accurate and

* Should the young candidate for the ministry object, as he justly may, the difficulty of meeting with this work of Gregory, let him substitute in its place bishop Burnet's treatise on the same subject. It is to be lamented, that so valuable a book is so little read and known, and that while the public taste has called for repeated editions of inflammatory politics, this treasure of pastoral instruction is dwindled into an oblivion little short of contempt.

solid exposition of so difficult a prophet as Ezekiel. It is, in fact, in occasional passages independent of system, that Gregory shines. I single out a passage as an instance of this:

"Generally those who most excel in divine contemplation, are most oppressed with temptation. By the first the soul is lifted up to God, by the second it is pressed down into itself. Were it not for this, the mind would fall into pride. There is, by the divine disposition, a wonderful temperature in this subject, that the saint may neither rise too high, nor sink too low."

Observe how divinely he speaks concerning the teaching of the Holy Spirit, in one of his homilies on the gospels. On the words in St John's gospel, he (the Spirit, shall teach you all things, he says, "Unless the Spirit be with the heart of the hearer, the word of the teacher is barren. Let no man attribute to the teacher what he understands from his mouth; for, unless there be an internal teacher, the tongue of the external one labours in vain. Why is there such a difference in the sensations of hearers, all hearing the same words? It is to be ascribed to this special teaching. John himself in his epistle teaches the same, 'the anointing teaches you of all things.' It is plain that the Spirit of the Lord was not departed, as yet, from the Roman church, while his internal instructions, despised so fearlessly by the profane, and scrutinised so malignantly by many orthodox professors in our days, were regarded with so much simplicity and reverence.

His dialogues, if indeed they be his, or be not much interpolated, dishonour his memory by the excess of superstition.

Thus far of the first of the Gregories; it will not be saying enough in his praise, though it be a truth, that it would have been to the advantage of the reputation of the Roman church, if he had been the last of that name.

CHAPTER IX.

WRITERS OF THIS CENTURY.

FULGENTIUS adorned the beginning, and Gregory the close of this century, which produced no other authors of equal merit. And the decay in learning and knowledge was so great, that I shall detain the reader a very little time on this article.

Ennodius, bishop of Pavia, wrote against those, who affirmed, that man could only choose evil. With gross ignorance of the connection and scope of St. Paul's argument, he quotes his words in the Epistle to the Romans, ch. vii. as favourable to his views.

• Tom. II. Homil. on Ezek. xiv.
• Tom. II. p. 451.

"For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not:" thus ascribing to man, as such, what the apostle evidently speaks of as descriptive of the regenerate. He maintains that man by nature has power to turn himself to God, and deduces from the contrary doctrine the consequences which the advocates for the doctrine of free-will in all ages have done from the days of Cicero, who, it is remarkable, reasons exactly in the same manner.

On the other hand, John Maxentius, a Scythian monk, in company with a number of monks, his brethren, strenuously defended the doctrines of grace. In a confession of their faith is this sentence: "that free-will, since the entrance of sin, has of itself no other power but that of choosing some carnal good and pleasure," and that it can neither desire nor will, nor do any thing for eternal life, but by the operation of the Holy Spirit."

So remarkable a confession would seem to show some distinct knowledge of the depravity of the heart. Maxentius and his brethren were ill treated by Hormisdas, bishop of Rome, a bold and dexterous politician, of whose theological knowledge and practical piety I find no proofs. He accused them of turbulence and self-conceit, and after a year's attendance at Rome they were expelled thence by his order. I cannot find that Hormisdas gave any decided opinion on the subject himself; probably he had never studied it; but he acted imperiously and decisively. Maxentius wrote with vigour in defence of the doctrines of grace, and I wish I could gratify the reader with a larger account of a man, who was counted worthy to suffer shame for the faith of Christ. The controversy between the defenders of grace

and of human powers was still alive, and the Western Church continued still divided upon it.

Facundus, bishop of Hermiana in Africa, will deserve to be mentioned for the sake of one sentence: "The faithful, in receiving the sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, receive his body and his blood; not that the bread is properly his body, and the cup his blood; but because they contain in them the mystery of the body and blood of Jesus Christ."⁴ Though it makes no part of our system to confute the particular points of popery, I could not omit so clear a testimony against transubstantiation.

The Western Church is indebted for historical information to Gregory of Tours, the Eastern to Evagrius. It must be confessed that they are inelegant and injudicious writers: they had the literary taste of this century.

The truly evangelical second council of Orange has been already reviewed. The second council of Mascon, held in 585, will deserve to be mentioned. They were very zealous for the observation of Sunday. Let none follow any business on this day, say they: let none yoke oxen, or prosecute suits of law; but let all the world apply themselves to sing the praises of God. They decree penalties against sabbath-breakers. An advocate, who was guilty of the crime, was to be driven from the bar; a peasant or a slave to receive some stripes. They exhort christians also to spend the evening of Sunday in prayers. They forbid bishops to keep birds and dogs for game. They ordain the celebration of a synod every three years in a place appointed by the bishop of Lyons and king Gontranus. A proof may be drawn from hence that some spirit of genuine religion was still preserved in France.

CENTURY VII.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

The diversity of circumstances in different ages of the church constantly admonishes a historian, who loves method and perspicuity, to vary the arrangement of his materials. No abstract rules, but the circumstances of each period, should direct him in this matter.

In the century before us, barren and unpromising as it is for the most part, Great Britain shone with distinguished lustre.—As she was a world within herself, her ecclesiastical affairs were little connected with those of the Continent. Hence the propriety of reviewing them by themselves.—In this subject I shall closely follow the venerable Bede, whose narration extends to the year 731.—Though much of his history be fabulous and super-

¹ Du Pin. Cent. 6th.

⁴ Du Pin. Facundus.

stitious, it is still of the greatest value, because it is the only light which we have concerning the progress of the gospel in our own country for several generations; and some rays of truth, piety, and good sense, now and then break out in the historian amidst the clouds of legendary romance.

After the death of Augustine, the first archbishop of Canterbury, Laurentius, whom he had ordained, succeeded to that see. He trode^a in the steps of his predecessor, and laboured to promote the best interests of the English by frequent preaching of the word, and by a diligent and useful example. I doubt not the sincerity of this prelate; though seduced by the charms of a nominal unity, he laboured, as the first missionary Augustine had done, to bring the British churches to a conformity with the Church of Rome. He was actuated by the same subtle spirit of selfish ambition, of which even the best men in all ages have not been void; it operates imperceptibly, through the native energy of indwelling sin. The papist, the national churchman, and the sectary, are each liable to its influence, though in truly regenerate spirits there is likewise a diviner principle, and sordid views of secular gain are entirely excluded. In this manner I would appreciate the characters of the Roman missionaries in England. Their disinterested labours, just views of christian doctrine, and holy and unblemished lives, ought to have exempted them from the intemperate censures of writers, who seem to think an indiscriminate aversion to the Church of Rome to be one of the principal excellencies of a protestant historian.^c

Laurentius, in conjunction with Mellitus, bishop of London, and Justus, bishop of Rochester, endeavoured to reduce the "Scots, who inhabited Ireland"^d to a conformity with the English Church. The three prelates wrote to them with this view, and declared themselves to be sent by the Roman See to propagate the gospel among the pagan nations. Laurentius complained of the bigotry of a certain Irish bishop, who, coming to Canterbury, refused to eat at the same table, or even in the same house with him. The archbishop could not prevail either with the Britons or with the Irish to enter into his views. "Even the present times, says our author, declare how little success he had." At the period in which Bede concludes his history, the greatest part of the British

churches remained still distinguished from the English. The bishops of Rome continued to superintend the latter; and while Ethelbert lived, the gospel flourished. This prince died after a reign of 56 years, twenty-one years after he had embraced christianity, and was buried by the side of his deceased queen Bertha. Among other benefits which the English derived from him, there was a code of laws formed after the example of the Romans,^e which was still extant in Bede's time, and was particularly calculated to protect the persons and property of the Church.

His son and successor Eadwald not only despised christianity, but also lived in incest with his father's wife. Whence all, who had embraced the gospel through motives purely secular, were induced to relapse into idolatry. Sabereth, king of the East Saxons, who had followed the example of Ethelbert who was his uncle, being deceased, his three sons became joint heirs of his kingdom. Immediately they resumed the idolatry, which they had intermitted a little in their father's lifetime, and encouraged their subjects to do the same. These princes observing the bishop of London to distribute the bread of the Eucharist in the church, asked why he did not give them the bread, which he had usually given to their father, and which he distributed at that time to the people. "If you will be washed, replied Mellitus, in the same laver of regeneration in which your father was, you may partake of the same sacred bread: but, if ye despise the laver of life, ye cannot partake of the bread of life." We will not, said they, enter into that fountain; we do not know that we need it, yet we choose to eat of that bread. In vain did the upright pastor seriously and diligently admonish them, that it was not possible for any person remaining uncleansed from sin to partake of the communion: in a rage they declared, "If you will not gratify us in so small a matter, you shall not remain in our province." They thereupon ordered him to be gone with his associates.

Mellitus, thus expelled, came into Kent to consult with Laurentius and Justus. The three bishops agreed to leave the country, that they might serve God with freedom elsewhere, rather than remain among enemies without fruit. Mellitus and Justus retired first into France, waiting the issue. The three princes not long after were slain in battle, but their subjects remained still incorrigible.

Laurentius intending to follow the two bishops, employed himself in prayer in the church during the silent hours of the night, with much agony and many tears, entreating God to look upon the state of the English Church, which, after such promising begin-

^a Bede, B. II. C. 4.

^b I advert, particularly to Bower's Lives of the Popes, and to Warner's Ecclesiastical History of our own country. Their laborious collection of facts deserves commendation. I avail myself of all the helps which offer, for the supply of materials.—But, I mean to extol the Church of Christ, wherever I can find her; nor does a Roman dress, when she appears in it, convey any prejudices to my mind.

^c Bede's own words, which demonstrate that the Irish were anciently called Scots.

^d Bede, Id. C. 5. .

sings, sterner now on the eve of a total dissolution. Next morning he paid a visit to the king, who struck at last with horror for his crimes, and relenting, when he appeared in imminent danger of losing his christian instructors for ever, forbade his departure, reformed his own life and manners, was baptized, and from that time became a zealous supporter of the faith.¹

Eadbald was determined to show the sincerity of his zeal. He recalled Mellitus and Justus from France, after a year's exile. Justus was reinstated in Rochester; but Mellitus could not recover his See. The Londoners preferred idolatry, and Eadbald had not the same power which his father had possessed in that city, to oblige them to receive him. So far, however, as his influence extended, he exerted it for the cause of Christ, and from the time of his conversion, adorned the gospel, and propagated it among his people.

Laurentius being deceased, Mellitus was appointed the third archbishop of Canterbury, while Justus still presided at Rochester. These two bishops governed the English Church with much care and labour.² Mellitus, after having given the most undoubted proofs of genuine piety, and presided over the diocese of Canterbury five years, died in the year 624, and was succeeded by Justus.

England was still governed by the Saxon Heptarchy. Seven kingdoms, often at war with one another, and also with the old native Britons, exhibited in our island scenes of the most unpleasant nature. Nor is any portion of our history in a secular view less interesting. Nevertheless in this dull period it pleased God to show the power of his grace among our ancestors. Hitherto Kent almost alone had been illuminated; but the gospel was now introduced into the North, where reigned Edwin, king of the Northumbrians. And a woman was once more honoured as the instrument of salvation to a king her husband, and to many of his subjects. Edwin had sent to Eadbald to desire his sister Ethelburg or Tate! in marriage.

¹ Bede, C. 6.

² I was unwilling to introduce into the narrative the story of St. Peter's whipping of Laurentius that night in the church, and reproving of him for his cowardice; whence he was said to have been induced to wait upon Eadbald next morning, who was struck, it seems, with terror at the sight of the stripes which the bishop had received. Stories of this sort were innumerable in those times. The steady perseverance of Eadbald, and the entire change both of his private and public conduct, demonstrated the reality of his conversion. He most probably retained an internal reverence for the religion in which he had been instructed in his childhood, against which his grand objection seems to have been the love of a dissolute life. The Lord honoured the prayers of Laurentius with success, and recovered the English Church at the last extremity. The substance of the narrative remains entire, abstracted from the legend which disfigures it.

³ Bede, C. 7.

⁴ Bede, C. 9.

The Kentish prince, with that christian sincerity, which had ever distinguished him since his conversion, answered that it was not lawful to marry his sister to an infidel. Edwin replied, that he would certainly grant free liberty of conscience to the princess and to her attendants, adding that he himself would receive the same religion, if it appeared more worthy of God. Upon this Eadbald consented, and sent his sister into Northumberland,³ attended by Paulinus, who was consecrated bishop of the North of England by Justus in the year 625. The reason of sending him was, that by daily exhortations and administration of the communion he might guard the young princess and her attendants from the infection of idolatry. But Providence had a higher and more extensive aim, and infused into the heart of Paulinus⁴ a strong desire to propagate the gospel in these regions. He laboured much both to preserve Ethelburg and her attendants in christian simplicity, and to draw over some of the pagans to the faith. But though he preached a long time, "still, (it is Bede's quotation), the God of this world blinded the minds of unbelievers." After some time Edwin was very near being murdered by an assassin whom the king of the West Saxons sent against him, and the same night his queen was delivered of a daughter. While the king was thanking his gods for the birth of a daughter, Paulinus began to give thanks to the Lord Christ. Edwin told him, that he himself would worship Christ, and renounce all his gods, if he would give him victory over the king of the West Saxons, who had attempted to murder him, and, for the present, he gave the young infant to Paulinus to be baptized. She was the first Northumbrian who was admitted into the visible church by the ordinance of baptism; and twelve of the king's family were baptized on that occasion. Edwin collecting his forces vanquished the West Saxons, and killed or reduced into subjection all who had conspired against him. Returning victorious, he determined no longer to serve idols. He was, however, in no hurry to be baptized, but resolved to examine seriously the grounds and reasons of Christianity. He attended Paulinus's instructions, held conferences with prudent and knowing persons, and was himself observed frequently to commune with his own heart, in silence, and anxiously to inquire what was true religion. All who use his methods will not fail to know the truth.

Edwin was doubtless in good earnest, and at length held a consultation with his intimate friends and counsellors. "What is," says

⁵ This term meant in those times all that part of England which lies to the north of the Humber.

⁶ He was one of the monks whom Gregory had sent into England, and possessed much of the pious and zealous spirit of that renowned prelate.

he, "this hitherto unheard of doctrine, this new worship?" Coifi, the chief of the priests, answered, "See you, O king, what this is, which is lately preached to us? I declare most frankly what I have found to be true, that the religion we have hitherto followed is of no value. If the gods could do any thing, they would more particularly distinguish me with their favours, who have served them so diligently. If the new doctrine be really better, let us embrace it." Another of the nobles observed, that he had taken notice of a swallow, which had rapidly flown through the king's house, entering by one door and going out at the other. This happened, he said, when the king was sitting at supper in the hall: a fire burning in the midst, and the room being heated, a tempest of rain or snow raged without; the poor swallow felt indeed a temporary warmth, and then escaped out of the room. "Such," says he, "is the life of man; but what goes before, or comes after, is buried in profound darkness. Our ignorance then, upon such principles as hitherto we have embraced, is confessed; but if this new doctrine really teach us any thing more certain, it will deserve to be followed." These and similar reflections were made by the king's counselors. Coifi expressed also a desire to hear Paulinus preach, which, by the king's order, was complied with. The chief priest, having heard the sermon, exclaimed, "I knew formerly, that what we worshipped was nothing; because the more studiously I sought for truth, the less I found it. Now I openly declare, that in this preaching appears the truth, which is able to afford us life, salvation, and eternal bliss. I advise that we instantly destroy the temples and altars, which we have served in vain." The king feeling the conviction with no less strength, openly confessed the faith of Christ, and asked Coifi, who should be the first man that should profane the idolatrous places. "I ought to do it," replied the priest, "I, who worshipped them in folly will give an example to others in destroying them, by the wisdom given me from the true God. He immediately went to the temple and profaned it, rejoicing in the knowledge of the Most High, and ordered his companions to burn the building with its enclosures. The place was still shown in our author's time, not far from York, to the east of the Derwent.

In the eleventh year of Edwin's reign, this prince, with all his nobles and very many of the commonalty, was baptized. 180 years after the arrival of the Saxons in Britain, and in the year of Christ 627. This was performed at York in a wooden oratory, in which Edwin had been first proposed as a catechumen for baptism. By the advice of Pauli-

nus he afterwards began to build on the same spot a church of stone, which however he did not live to finish, but it was completed by Oswald, his successor. Paulinus, first bishop of York, continued for six years, till the death of Edwin, to preach the gospel; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.² Edwin's children were afterwards baptized; and so strong was the desire of his subjects for christianity, that Paulinus coming with the king and queen to a royal villa called Adregin, spent there thirty-six days in teaching and baptizing from morning till night. At another time he baptized in the river Swale,³ which flows near Catterick, a number of persons who resorted thither. Many of these conversions may be supposed to have been the result of mere complaisance to the court. But there is every reason to believe, that there was a real effusion of the Spirit at this time. And, in this age, when men profess much to think for themselves, it will not be easy to find a person in high life attending with so cool and reasonable a spirit to the nature and evidence of true religion, as Edwin and his nobles did at a time which we call extremely barbarous. They thought impartially, and they had the indispensable qualification of being serious in their researches.

Edwin induced also Carpwald, king of the East Angles, to embrace the gospel. Redwald, the father of this prince, had been baptized in Kent, but had been seduced by his wife into idolatry. Carpwald was succeeded by his brother Sibert, a man of singular zeal and piety, whose labours for the spiritual benefit of his subjects were much assisted by Felix, a Burgundian Christian. This person had received a commission from Honorius, the successor of Justus at Canterbury, to preach among the East Angles, which he did with great success, and lived and died bishop of Dummock.⁴

The zealous Paulinus preached also in Lincolnshire, the first province south of the Humber,⁵ where the governor of Lincoln⁶ with his house was converted to God. Bede informs us that a friend of his heard an old person make this declaration, "I was baptized together with a multitude of others, in the river Oubanta⁷ by Paulinus, in the presence of Edwin." Wonderful things are told us of the perfect peace, order, and justice which prevailed during the reign of the wise and pious king of Northumberland.

Attempts were made all this time by the bishops of Rome, to induce the Irish to unite themselves to the English Church, but in vain. John, the bishop of Rome, wrote let-

² They are Bede's words; the scriptural reader knows whence he borrowed them. *Id. C. 74.*

³ *Sualva, qui vicum juxta Cataractam præterit.*

⁴ Now Dunwich, in Suffolk.

⁵ Lindescolina.

⁶ Bede, C. 16.

⁷ New Trent.

• Bede, C. 13.

ters also into Ireland against the Pelagian heresy, which was reviving there.

Edwin, after having six years served the cause of Christ, was slain in a battle, which he fought with Cadwalla, a British prince, a christian by profession, and with Penda, king of the Saxon principality of Mercia, a *professed* pagan. It is remarkable that the British prince used his victory with savage barbarity, and our author complains that, to his times, the British christians looked on the English only as pagans. Paulinus, after this mournful event, retired with Edwin's queen into Kent, whence he had brought her. There being a vacancy at Rochester, he was by Eadbald, who still reigned in Kent, fixed in that see, which he held to his death. His deacon James, whom he had left in Northumberland, preserved still some remains of christianity in a province now overrun by Pagans. Such are the vicissitudes of the church in this world: her perfect rest is above.

The situation of the North was, after this, deplorable. Cadwalla, a British king, tyrannized with the fiercest barbarity over the subjects of Edwin, till at length Oswald, his nephew, vanquished and slew Cadwalla, and established himself in the kingdom. He had, in his younger days, lived an exile in Ireland, and had there been baptized. Desirous of evangelizing his people, he sent for a pastor out of Ireland, who, after he had made some fruitless attempts, returned into his own country, complaining of the intractable disposition of the Northumbrians. "It seems to me," said Aidan, a monk, who was present at his complaints, "that your austere manners and conduct toward them, was unsuitable to their state of extreme ignorance. They should be treated like infants with milk, till they become capable of stronger meat." The consequence was, what probably Aidan little expected; he was himself deputed by an Irish council to enter on the mission.

The character of this missionary would have done honour to the purest times. We may more confidently depend on the account given of him, because he belonged not to the Roman communion, to which Bede was superstitiously devoted, but was a schismatic in the observation of Easter, as all the christians in the British isles were, except the Saxons. To him Bede applies the expression, that "he had a zeal for God, though not FULLY" according to knowledge." Os-

wald, whom early education had rather prejudiced in favour of the same schism, gave him an episcopal See in the isle of Lindisfarne.² But there was a great difficulty which attended his ministry; Aidan spake English very imperfectly. Oswald himself, therefore, who thoroughly understood Irish, acted as his interpreter. The zeal of this monarch was indeed extraordinary, to induce him to take such pains. Encouraged by his protection, more Irish ministers came into the north of England, and churches were erected; the gospel was preached, and Northumberland recovered, by the zeal and piety of the new missionaries, the ground which it had lost by the expulsion of Paulinus. Even to the year 716³ the principles of evangelical piety flourished in the Irish school among this people; at which time they were reduced to the Roman communion.

Aidan himself was a shining example of godliness. He laboured to convert infidels and to strengthen the faithful. He gave to the poor whatever presents he received from the great, and employed himself with his associates in the Scriptures continually. He strictly avoided every thing luxurious, and every appearance of secular avarice or ambition: he redeemed captives with the money which was given him by the rich: he instructed them afterwards; and fitted them for the ministry.

The king was not inferior to the prelate in his endeavours to promote godliness. Uncorrupt and humble in the midst of prosperity, he showed himself the benefactor of the poor and needy, and cheerfully encouraged every attempt to spread the knowledge and practice of godliness among men.

In the mean time Byrinus was sent from Rome into Britain, who, arriving among the West Saxons, and finding them all pagans, laboured to instruct them. Cynigilsus, their king, the father-in-law of Oswald, received baptism from him. The two princes gave to Byrinus the city of Dorchester;⁴ where he resided as bishop, and the gospel was propagated with success through this branch of the heptarchy.

In Kent Eadbald died in the year 640,⁵ and was succeeded by his son Easconbert, who reigned twenty-four years, was zealous in the support of godliness, and was the first Saxon king who totally destroyed all the idols in his dominions.

no true traces of their work appear, and leave salutary fruits behind them. The Irish Saint Colomban, and after him Aidan, as well as the Roman missionaries of the Gregorian School, influenced by the same Holy Spirit, left wholesome vestiges of their labours in the British isles, which extended even to distant ages. Had the former been Protestants, properly speaking, and the latter Papists, the same estimate ought to have been formed, though such a distinction in regard to those ages is chimerical.

² Now called Holy Island, four miles from Berwick.

³ Bede, C. 4.

⁴ Now Dorchester, near Oxford.

⁵ Bede, C. 8.

* Bede, B. III. C. 3, 4, 5.

² Non plene. Warner, by omitting the expression FULLY, misrepresents our venerable historian, as if he had looked on Aidan as wrong in point of knowledge altogether. In another place he invidiously compares the laboriousness and simplicity of the Irish missionary with the pomp of the Roman pastors sent by Gregory. We have seen abundant proof of the integrity and diligence of the latter. The truth is, that though God is no respecter of persons, man is very apt to be so. Wherever he sends pastors fitted and commissioned by himself, ge-

Oswald at length, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, was slain in battle by the same Penda, king of Mercia, who was mentioned before. A memorable instance of the unsearchable ways of Providence! Two kings, whose equals in piety and virtue are not easily found in any age, both lose their lives in battle with the same enemy, a barbarian and a pagan! But they served not God for worldly, but for heavenly blessings.

Providence was however preparing the way for the propagation of the gospel through the whole heptarchy. Young Penda, son of the tyrant of Mercia, desired in marriage the daughter of Oswy, brother and successor to Oswald. His reception of Christianity was made the condition; and the young prince, we are told, on hearing the doctrines of the gospel preached, was induced to declare, that he would become a christian, even if Oswy's daughter were denied him. Two years before the death of old Penda, the son married the Northumbrian princess, and patronized christianity in that part of his father's dominions which was committed to his government. But the latter renewed hostilities against Oswy, and at length was slain in battle.^b Oswy, now master of Mercia and Northumberland, applied himself to propagate christianity among his new subjects. Through his influence also the gospel was restored to the kingdom of the East Saxons; and London, which had rejected the ministry of Mellitus, again embraced the religion of Christ.

In this century, Kentigern, bishop of Glasgow in Scotland, being expelled from his See, founded a monastery and a bishopric on the banks of the river Elwy in North Wales. Archbishop Usher, quoting John of Tinmouth, says, there were in the abbey 965 monks, one of whom was named Asaph. Kentigern, being called back to Glasgow, appointed Asaph abbot and bishop of Llan-Elwy. Of Asaph it is recorded, that he was a zealous preacher, and that he used to say, "they envy the salvation of souls, who withstand the preaching of the Word." The See has since borne his name; and he seems to have had a spirit superior to the monastic superstition, in which he was educated.^c Marianus Scotus, in his Chronicle, says, in regard to this century, "Ireland was filled with Saints. Their schools were renowned for ages."^d

But it is time to bring the English Church history of this century to a close. That there was a real effusion of the Holy Spirit on England, so that numbers were turned from idols to the living God; that pastors, first of the Roman, and afterwards of the

British communion, laboured in the work with simplicity and success, has been evidenced. We have had also several instances of the completion of that prophecy, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and Queens thy nursing mothers."^e But the zeal and purity of the christian spirit seldom last much longer than thirty or forty years in any place. The native depravity of man gradually quenches the Spirit of God, and the power of godliness is soon buried, or at least very faintly subsists in the rubbish of factious contentions and worldly lusts. This I find to have been the case in the latter part of the century in England. Wilfred, bishop of York, a very suspicious character, in his exile laboured indeed among the Frisians, and is said to have been the first missionary who taught that people. If he did any real good among them, it was the most useful part of his life; for in Britain he seems to have fomented turbulence and contention. He paved, however, the way for more upright missionaries, whose labours in Friesland shall be mentioned hereafter. The craft of Satan too commonly succeeds in fomenting divisions, even among those who with equal sincerity are engaged in the best of causes. While such men as Paulinus and Aidan lived, the diversity of sentiments produced no great mischief. Afterwards, as depravity increased, and the spirit of faith and love grew colder, very hurtful disputes arose, to the scandal of the gospel. The Roman Church, however, acquired more and more influence, though it was very far from pervading the whole of the British isles at the end of the century. But nothing particularly pertinent to the design of this history occurs. Let it suffice us to say, that our ancestors saw in this century a blessed time, the fruits of which will abide for ever.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN GERMANY AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

THE northern parts of Europe had still remained in the darkness of idolatry. In this century they were visited by the Most High. The Britons, Scots, and Irish, were honoured as the principal instruments in the work; and this circumstance affords an additional evidence to the account already given of the genuine spirit of godliness which prevailed in the British isles. The French had also their share in the blessed cause. I shall throw together the very imperfect hints which are preserved to us of these important transactions. Though the first instance more

^b The battle was fought between Oswy and Penda, near Louden, now Leeds, in Yorkshire, at Winwidfield, on the river Winwad, now Aire.

^c Alban Butler, Vol. V.

^d Id.

^e Isaiah xlix. 23,

properly relates to France than to Germany, it may with no great impropriety be mentioned in this chapter. Omer, bishop of Tarras, the old metropolis of the Morini in Artois, laboured with success in the cultivation of a wilderness. Vice and idolatry were very predominant in his diocese; but by the assistance of Bertin, a Swiss, his kinsman, he was enabled to eradicate inveterate evils, and to civilise a race of barbarians.

The erection of many convents in Germany for the Scotch and Irish, some of which are still extant, is to be accounted for from the ecclesiastical connections of their ancestors. Many persons travelled from Great Britain and Ireland with the laudable purpose of preaching Christ in Batavia, Belgium, and Germany.¹ And however superstition might tarnish their labours, there must have been a nobler principle to have induced men to undergo so much danger, with hardly any possible prospect of lucre or of fame. Mere philosophers are generally but too liberal in censure and railery: we seldom, however, hear of them engaging in any work of so disinterested a nature. The love of God in Christ alone can support the spirit of men in such enterprises.

Columban, an Irish monk, distinguished from him of the same name, spoken of before, who was called "the ancient," toward the close of the foregoing century had extirpated the remains of expiring paganism in France. He also passed the Rhine, and evangelized the Suevi,² the Boii,³ and other German nations. He laboured in the cause to his death, which happened in the year 615. Gal, one of his companions, laboured with much zeal about the lakes of Zurich and Constance. Near the latter lake, at a little distance from Bregent, he erected a monastery, which still bears his name. In fortitude and laboriousness he was inferior to none of the missionaries of this age. But we find very little worthy of being recorded concerning him.

The account of Kilian, another Irish missionary, is somewhat more satisfactory. He received a commission from the bishop of Rome, toward the end of the century, to preach to the infidels; and with some of his disciples he came to Wirtzburg upon the Mayne, where a pagan duke called Gosbert was governor. The duke received the gospel, was baptized, and many followed his example. But he had married his brother's wife. The missionary united discretion with zeal, and deferred his admonitions on this head, till he found that his pupil the duke was firmly settled in the faith.⁴ Kilian at length ventured to act the part of John the

Baptist, and the event was in a great measure similar. Gosbert promised to obey, but delayed the execution of his promise till he should return from an expedition. The mischief of procrastination against the light of conscience was never more strongly illustrated. In his absence Geilana, for that was the name of the German Herodias, procured the murder of Kilian and his companions. They were engaged in devotional exercises, and died with the patience of martyrs in the year 682. Gosbert was prevailed on by the artifices of Geilana to suffer the murderers to escape with impunity. But all the actors in this tragedy, Gosbert among the rest, came to an unhappy end; and there is no doubt but that in this case, as well as many others, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. Numbers of the eastern Franks had embraced christianity, and sealed the ministry of Kilian. Barbatus, born in the territory of Benevento, in Italy, in the beginning of this century, was also a great ornament to it. Meditation on the Scriptures was his chief delight. He was looked upon to excel in preaching. He acted as curate of Moreona near Benevento, and gave great offence by his faithfulness. By the malice of the people he was obliged to retire to Benevento. This town was possessed by the Lombards, who were chiefly Arians; many of them were indeed idolaters, though some were of the general church, with their duke Arichis, a friend of Gregory I. Barbatus labouring there found the christians, so called, very idolatrous. They worshipped a golden viper, and a tree on which the skin of a wild beast was hung. He preached and prayed a long time: at length the emperor Constantine besieging Benevento, the wicked inhabitants were intimidated so far, as to repent of their idolatry. Barbatus was allowed to cut down the tree, and to melt the golden viper, of which he made a sacramental chalice. This man was appointed bishop of Benevento in 663, and destroyed every vestige of idolatry in the whole state. He lived afterwards to bear a testimony by his presence in the council of Constantinople against the Monothelite heresy, and died in 682. See Butler's Lives.

Toward the conclusion of the century, Willibrod, an English missionary, and eleven of his countrymen, crossed over the sea into Holland, to labour among the Friezelanders. But being ill-treated by the king of Friesland, who put one of their company to death,⁵ they retired into Denmark. Returning, however, into Friesland in the year 693, they propagated divine truth with success. Willibrod was ordained bishop of Wiltburg¹ by the Roman prelate, and laboured in his diocese to his death; while his associates spread

¹ Mosheim, Cent. 7th. C. 1.

² This people inhabited the places between the Rhine and the Elbe.

³ Now Bavarians.

⁴ Fleury, B. XL. 37.

⁵ Mosheim, Cent. VII. C. 1.

¹ Now Utrecht.

the gospel through Westphalia and the neighbouring countries.^m

It was in this century, the former part of it, according to the researches of one author,ⁿ the latter part, according to those of another,^o that Bavaria received the gospel from the ministry of Rupert, or Robert, bishop of Worms. He was invited by Theodo, duke of Bavaria. His ministry prospered, and he was appointed bishop of Salzburg. The increasing harvest required more missionaries: he therefore returned to his own country, and brought twelve assistants: from that time christianity was established in Bavaria. Corbinian, another Frenchman, watered where Rupert had planted. Duke Theodo received him gladly. His son and successor Grimoald was induced to part with his wife, whom he had married contrary to the Levitical laws of matrimonial consanguinity; and so far as can be judged from very imperfect accounts, the gospel was received with great sincerity in this country.^p

Some time after, Emmeram an Aquitanian Frenchman, leaving his country and his large possessions, travelled to Ratisbon, to spread the gospel. He was well received by another Theodo, duke of Bavaria. He observed, that the Bavarians were, many of them at least, still addicted to idolatrous rites, which they mixed with christianity. The old inhabitants were particularly guilty of these things. He laboured among them three years, preaching in all the towns and villages, and reserved for himself only the bare necessities of life. His success was great, and his end was worthy of his profession. Lambert, a son of the duke, murdered him at length with savage barbarity. He had been offered a large revenue and a settlement at Ratisbon by Theodo, which he had refused, declaring that he only wished to preach Christ crucified.

Marinus and Anian, two Egyptians, came into Bavaria, and were very successful in the same cause. But the excessive austerity, which they brought with them from the east, must have been detrimental to their work. The former at length was murdered by rob-

bers; the latter died a natural death. Eloi, bishop of Noyon, carefully visited his large diocese, especially the pagan parts of it, and was very successful among the Flemings, the Antwerpers, and the Frisians. At first he found them fierce and exceedingly obstinate. But God was with him both in life and doctrine. Every Easter he baptized great numbers, who had been brought to the knowledge of God in the preceding year. Very aged persons, amidst crowds of children, came to be baptized, and there is the fairest evidence of his evangelical success. This is all that I can find, with certainty, of the propagation of the gospel in the seventh century in Germany and the neighbouring countries. The censures of Mosheim, as if the greatest part of the missionaries were not sincere, or as if many of the monks covered their ambition with the cloak of mortification, appear to me illiberal and unfounded, and would have been more worthy of a modern sceptic. Superstition and an excessive attachment to the Roman See is very visible among them. But the little account of facts, which we have, bears testimony to their uprightness. Where is that charity which hopeth all things, if we are to suppose men to be wrong against all appearances? If ecclesiastical historians had delighted as much in recording good as they have in recording evil, it is probable a more ample refutation of the inconsiderate aspersions of this author might have been exhibited to the reader.

CHAPTER III.

THE GENERAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

PHOCAS, the Greek emperor, was deposed and slain by Heraclius in the year 610. He was one of the most vicious and profligate tyrants, and may be compared with Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. Since the days of Constantine such characters had been exceeding rare. For such was the benign influence of the gospel, that even amidst all the corruptions and abuses of it, which were now so numerous, a decency of character and conduct, unknown to their Pagan predecessors, was supported by the emperors in general. Heraclius, the successor of Phocas, reigned thirty years. In the beginning of his reign the Persians desolated the eastern part of the empire, and made themselves masters of Jerusalem. While Asia groaned under their cruelties and oppressions, and was afflicted with scourge after scourge, for her long abuse of the best gift of God, an op-

^m Disen, an Irish monk, taught the gospel in Ireland, France, and Germany. His labours were most remarkably crowned with success in the neighbourhood of Meins.—A. Butler.

ⁿ Velselius *Rerum Boicarum*, B. IV.

^o Fleury, B. XI. 31. If Fleury's chronology be right, the greatest part of the narrative before us will belong to the next century.

^p This missionary was remarkable for private devotion, as well as public labours, and reserved to himself a considerable portion of time every day for prayer and meditation. But from Alban Butler's account I learn, that Grimoald persecuted Corbinian on account of his faithfulness, and that Bittrude, the relict of Grimoald's brother, hired assassins to murder him. Both Grimoald and Bittrude suffered miserably. If the former was induced to repentance at all, he seems to have relapsed. After the deaths of his persecutors, Corbinian returned to Frisingen, and laboured till his death, which happened in the year 730.

^q Velselius. Id.

^r Mosheim, Id. I find no just reason to suspect any of them except Wilfrid, bishop of York, mentioned in the last Chapter.

portunity was given for the exercise of christian graces to a bishop of a church, which had long ceased to produce christian fruit.

This was John, bishop of Alexandria, called the Almoner, on account of his extensive liberality. He daily supplied with necessities those who flocked into Egypt, after they had escaped the Persian arms. He sent to Jerusalem the most ample relief for such as remained there: he ransomed captives; placed the sick and wounded in hospitals, and visited them, in person, two or three times a week. He even seems to have interpreted too strictly the sacred rule, "of giving to him that asketh of thee." His spirit however was noble; "Should the whole world come to Alexandria," said he, "they could not exhaust the treasures of God."

The Nile not having risen to its usual height, there was a barren season; provisions were scarce, and crowds of refugees still poured into Alexandria. John continued, however, his liberal donatives, till he had neither money, nor credit. The prayer of faith was his resource, and he still persevered in hope. He even refused a very tempting offer of a person, who would have bribed him with a large present, that he might be ordained deacon. "As to my brethren the poor," said the holy prelate, "God, who fed them, before you and I were born, will take care to feed them now, if we obey him." Soon afterward he heard of the arrival of two large ships, which he had sent into Sicily for corn. "I thank thee, O Lord," cried the bishop in a rapture of joy, "that thou hast kept me from selling thy gift for money."

From the beginning of his bishopric he maintained 7500 poor persons by daily alms. He was accessible to them on all occasions; and what is most material, divine faith seems to have influenced his acts of love. "If God," said he, "allow us to enter into his house at all times, and if we wish him speedily to hear us, how ought we to conduct ourselves toward our brethren?" He constantly studied the scriptures, and, in his conversation, was instructive and exemplary. Slander and evil speaking he peculiarly disliked. If any person in his presence was guilty in this respect, he would give another turn to the discourse. If the person still persisted, he would direct his servant not to admit him any more.

The long course of heresy, licentiousness, and ambition, which had filled the Alexandrian church, supported by the shameful examples of such pastors as Theophilus and other profligate men, must have reduced it to the lowest ebb; and I wonder not to find, that persons behaved indecently, even in public worship. John, one day seeing seven

ral leave the church after the reading of the gospel, went out also and sat down among them. "Children," said he, "the shepherd should be with his flock; I could pray at home, but I cannot preach at home." By doing this twice, he reformed the abuse. Let it be marked, as an evidence of the seal of this prelate, who, like another Josiah, seems to have been sent to reform a falling church, that the preaching of the word engaged much of his heart, and let it moreover be observed, that the contempt of preaching is a certain token of extreme degeneracy.

A canon was made at Paris, in a council, in the year 614, the same year in which Jerusalem was taken, which enjoins that he shall be ordained to succeed a deceased bishop, who shall be chosen by the archbishop, together with the bishops of the province, the clergy and the people, without any prospect of gain: if the ordination be conducted otherwise through compulsion or neglect, the election shall be void. The intelligent reader will hence judge of the state of ecclesiastical polity at that time.

In 616 John the Almoner departed from Alexandria, for fear of the Persians, and died soon after in Cyprus, in the same spirit in which he had lived; and with him ends all that is worth recording of the church of Alexandria.

In the same year the haughty Chosroes, king of Persia, having conquered Alexandria and Egypt, and taken Chalcedon, Heraclius, who saw the ruin of his empire approaching, begged for peace. "That I will never consent to," replied the tyrant, "till you renounce him who was crucified, whom you call God, and with me adore the sun." If one compare Chosroes and Heraclius, their personal characters will not appear intrinsically different. In one is seen a daring blasphemer of Christ, in the other a nominal professor of his religion, whose life brought no honour to the name. Their ostensible characters in the world were, however, extremely different. The Lord, who is a jealous God, has ever been used to confound his open enemies in the view of all mankind. Chosroes was a second Sennacherib, and he was treated as such by the Sovereign of the universe. The spirit of Heraclius was roused, and God gave him wonderful success: the Persian king was repeatedly vanquished, though he ceased not to persecute the christians, so long as he had power; and after he had lost the greatest part of his dominions, he was murdered by his own son, as was the case with Sennacherib, and in the year 628 the Persian power ceased to be formidable to the Roman empire.

It is not without reason that St. Paul exhorts us "to shun profane and vain babblings; because their word will eat like a can-

* Fleury, XXXVII. 10.

* Fleury, B. XXXVII. 34.

heresies, opposite extremes, the one dividing the person, the other confounding the two natures of Jesus Christ, though condemned by councils, still flourished in great vigour in the East. And the resistance of the orthodox had little effect, for want of the energy of true spiritual life, which still subsisted in a measure in the West. For there the sound doctrine of grace, the guard of true humility, was an ensign, around which truly pious men were wont to rally their strength from time to time. But, in Asia and Egypt, religion was for the most part heartless speculation. And about the year 630 the Eutychian heresy produced another, the Monothelite, which ascribed only one will to Jesus Christ. This opinion was the natural consequence of that, which gave him only one nature. Theodore, bishop of Pharan in Arabia, first started this notion, which was also readily received by Sergius, bishop of Constantinople, whose parents had been Eutychians. Cyrus, who soon after was made bishop of Alexandria, supported the same heresy. The ambiguous subtilties of the party drew the emperor Heraclius into the same net, and the East was rapidly overspread with the heresy.

Sophronius, formerly the disciple of John the Almoner, a man of sincerity and simplicity, with tears bewailed and protested against the innovation in a council at Alexandria, but in vain. Having been elected bishop of Jerusalem in 629, he afterwards in 633 exerted his authority against the growing heresy, but with meekness of wisdom. In a synodical letter he explained with equal solidity and accuracy the divine and human operations of Jesus Christ, and gave pertinent instances of both.*

"When he thought fit, he gave his human nature an opportunity to act or to suffer whatever belonged to it. His incarnation was no fancy, and he always acted voluntarily. Jesus Christ, as God, willingly took on himself human nature, and he willingly suffered in his flesh to save us, and, by his merits, to free us from suffering. His body was subject to our natural and innocent passions: he permitted it to suffer, according to its nature, till his resurrection; then he freed himself from all that is corruptible in our nature, that he might deliver us from the same." Sophronius recommends himself to the prayers of Sergius, to whom he writes, and adds, "pray for our emperors," he means Heraclius and his son, "that God may give them victory over all the barbarians; particularly, that he would humble the pride of the Saracens, who for our sins have suddenly risen upon us, and lay all waste with fierce barbarity and impious confidence."

Thus, in the lowest times of evangelical religion, God ever raised up men who understood the truth, and knew how to defend it by sound argument, a charitable spirit, and an holy life. This seems to have been the case of Sophronius. In the mean time the Monothelite heresy spread wider and wider. Even Honorius, bishop of Rome, was led into the snare, owned but one will in Jesus Christ, and imposed silence on all the controversialists. Heraclius himself, who lent his imperial authority to the support of a speculative phantom, while he imposed on his own heart by a specious shew of theological nicety, lived in the gross and open wickedness of incest, by marrying his own niece.

The danger from the Saracens, mentioned by Sophronius, was no other than the victorious arms of Mahomet, the Arabian impostor. He had begun in the year 608 to declare himself a prophet, and, by the assistance of a Jew and a renegade christian, had formed a farrago of doctrines and rites, in which there was a mixture of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, whence he found means to draw over to his party some of the various sorts of men who inhabited Arabia. An age of excessive ignorance favoured his schemes: at this day so senseless and absurd a book as the Koran could scarce move the minds of any person in Europe. But he laid hold of the corrupt passions of man, and by indulging his followers in sensuality, ambition, and the love of booty, and by promising them a carnal heaven hereafter, he contrived a religion more directly adapted to please mankind than any other of which we have heard. At the same time by declaring war against all who did not receive him, he gave an undoubted right to all nations to attack a system which could only thrive by the oppression of others. But there are seasons of infatuation, when, for the sins of men, empires and kingdoms are permitted to slumber, and enter into no effectual measures of resistance, till invaders, at first weak and contemptible, grow in time to an enormous height. This was the case with Mahometanism. The time was come when the Saracen locusts were about to torment the christian world, and the prophecy of Rev. ix. (1—12) was going to be fulfilled. The Greeks were idly employed in the new dispute: vice and wickedness prevailed over the East in all forms. A few indeed mourned over the times, and adorned the truth by humility and holiness, but scarce any christian writers appeared to make a serious opposition to the doctrines of Mahomet, and at the time of his death, which happened in the year 631, he had conquered almost all Arabia.†

* 2 Tim. ii. 16. 17.
 † Fleury, XLVII. 41.
 ‡ Fleury, XXXVIII. 5.

* It has pleased God to permit the existence of this odious and contemptible religion to this day. And it

Notwithstanding the decrease of the impostor, the Mahometan arms proceeded still with the same rapidity. Damascus fell into the hands of his successors; and Sophronius exhorted his flock to take warning and repent. Jerusalem however was taken by the enemy in the year 637, and Sophronius died soon after. Antioch and Alexandria successively sunk under them. Persia itself was subdued. Thus did God equally punish the persecuting idolaters, and the vicious professors of christianity in the East. They were doomed to a long night of servitude under Mahometanism, which continues to this time. Heraclius himself died in the year 641. God had shewed him great mercies and given him very great encouragement to seek true religion, by the remarkable success of his arms against the Persians in the middle of his reign. But he lived wickedly and speculated unscripturally. And a new power was erected, which reaped the fruits of all his Persian triumphs, and tore from him the fairest provinces of the East.

To what purpose should I run through the names of the Monothelite controversy? Yet something must be said of the part which Maximus acted in it. He was one of the most learned men of the age, and had been employed by Heraclius as his secretary; but I wonder not that a man, who loved real godliness, as he did, should have a strong aversion to a court like that of Heraclius. He entered into the monastery of Chrysopolis near Chalcedon, and was at length elected abbot. He it was who succeeded Sophronius in the defence of the primitive faith, and with much labour confuted the heresiarchs. Martin, bishop of Rome, was excited by the zeal of Maximus to assemble a council, in the Lateran, of a hundred and five bishops in 649. Constans was at this time emperor; and, by a decree, had forbidden any side at all to be taken in the controversy. Sergius, Pyrrhus, and Paul, three successive bishops of Constantinople, had supported the heresy. The controversy had now lasted eighteen years. In this way the active minds of men, destitute of true godli-

ness, but eagerly embracing the form, gratified the self-righteous bias of the heart and all the malevolent passions in long-protracted controversies, while practical religion was lost. Nor could all the calamities of the times and the desolation of the eastern churches move them to the love of peace and truth.

In these circumstances, Martin in council ventured to anathematize the supporters of the Monothelite heresy. I cannot blame his disobedience to the emperor Constans in refusing to observe silence on a point of doctrine, which to him appeared important. Constans evidently forgot his office, when he required such things. And it is a curious instance of the power of prejudice in some Protestant historians,* that they will so much support the conduct of a worthless tyrant as Constans doubtless was, because his speculative principles induced him to treat a Roman bishop with cruelty. There was a haughtiness, no doubt, and an asperity in the language and behaviour of Martin, very unbecoming a christian. His cause however seems just; nor does it appear, that he either meant or acted treasonably: he defended that part of the truth, which was opposed, with the magnanimity, though not with the meekness, that became a bishop. Constans ordered him to be dragged into the East, and treated him with a long, protracted barbarity of punishment. Martin was firm to the last. "As to this wretched body," says he, "the Lord will take care of it. He is at hand; why should I give myself any trouble? for I hope in his mercy, that he will not prolong my course." He died in the year 655. His extreme sufferings of imprisonment, hunger, fetters, brutal treatment a thousand ways, call for compassion: his constancy demands respect; and his firm adherence to the doctrines of truth, though mixed with a very blameable ambition in maintaining the dignity of the Roman See, deserves the admiration of christians. He is, in Roman language, called St. Martin; and I hope he had a just title to the name in the best sense of the word.

Maximus was also brought to Constantinople, and, by the order of Constans, underwent a number of examinations. He was asked by an officer to sign the type;—so the edict of Constans was named. Only do this, said the officer, believe what you please in your heart. "It is not to the heart alone," replied Maximus, "that God hath confined our duty; we are also obliged with the mouth to confess Jesus Christ before men." It is astonishing^a to observe what pains were taken to engage him to own the Monothelite party, nor can this be accounted for in any

should be carefully observed, that Mahomet, wicked and deceitful as he doubtless was altogether, did not openly oppose God or his Christ. He did not deny directly, though he did consequentially, the divine revelation either of Old or New Testament. He always spoke respectfully of the inspired prophetic character of Moses and of Christ. He received so much of christianity as agrees with Socinianism. Jehovah was not therefore openly despised by him as he was by Julian, Chosroes, and Sennacherib. On them was fulfilled that scripture, "he repayeth them, that hate him, to destroy them; he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face," Deut. vii. 10. A speedy destruction of such avowed enemies seems to be intended, that the divine character may be vindicated. His covert enemies, who yet treat him with respectful decorum, are often permitted long to exist, for the punishment of false professors. For the truth and majesty of God are not so sensibly dishonoured by them in the view of the whole world, as to call for their immediate extinction.

* See Bower and Mosheim.

^a See Butler's Vol. XII.

^b Fleury, B. XXXIV. 12, &c.

other way than by the opinion which all men had of his piety and sincerity, and the expectation of the influence, which his example would have on many. But the labour was lost: Maximus, though seventy-five years old, preserved all the vigour of understanding, and confounded his examiners, by the solidity of his answers. He clearly proved, "that to allow only one will or operation in Jesus Christ was in reality to allow only one nature: that therefore the opinion for which the emperor was so zealous, was nothing more than Eutychianism dressed up anew: that he had not so properly condemned the emperor, as the doctrine, by whomsoever it was held: that it was contrary to the current of all ecclesiastical antiquity: that our Saviour was always allowed from the apostolical times to be perfect God and perfect man, and must therefore have the nature, will, and operations distinctly belonging both to God and man: that the new notion went to confound the idea both of the Divinity and the humanity, and to leave him no proper existence at all: that the emperor was not a pastor, and that it had never been practised by christian emperors in the best times, to impose silence on bishops: that it was the duty of the latter not to disguise the truth by ambiguous expressions, but to defend it by clear and distinct terms adapted to the subject: that Arianism had always endeavoured to support itself by such artifices as those employed by the emperor, and that a peace obtained by such methods in the church was at the expense of truth." I admire the good sense and sincerity, which appear through the very long account of his defence, of which I have given a very brief summary. Were it not, that God, from age to age, had raised up such champions in his church, humanly speaking, not an atom of christian truth by this time would have been left in the world. For heretics have uniformly acted on this plan: they have imposed silence on the orthodox, under pretence of the love of peace and union, whenever they had the power, and in the mean time propagated their own tenets. The question before us was very metaphysical and obscure; yet, if the emperor's side had prevailed, instead of an insignificant party, called the Maronites, in the East, who still subsist, the Monothelites might have filled half the globe to this day.

The tyrant, enraged to find himself disappointed, ordered Maximus to be scourged, his tongue to be cut out, his right hand to be cut off; and he then directed the maimed abbot to be banished and doomed to imprisonment for the rest of his life. The same punishment was inflicted on two of his disciples, both of the name of Anastasius. These three upright men were separated from each other, and confined in three cas-

tles in obscure regions of the East. Their condemnation took place in 656: Maximus died in 662: one of the Anastasius's in 664: they both had sustained the most cruel indignities, and had been rendered incapable of any consolations except those which undoubtedly belong to men who suffer for righteousness sake. The other Anastasius, died in a castle at the foot of Mount Caucasus in 666.

While such barbarous measures were used by nominal christians to support unscriptural tenets, it is not to be wondered at that providence frowned on the affairs of the empire. The Saracens now ruled over Arabia, Persia, Mesopotamia, Chaldaea, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and part of Africa. Even Europe suffered from the depredations of the Arabians, and part of Sicily was reduced to their subjection.

The unworthy emperor Constans murdered also his own brother Theodosius, and continued to disgrace the christian name by his follies, his vices, and his cruelties. He was himself dispatched at length in the twenty-seventh year of his reign in 667.

In the year 680 a general council was called at Constantinople: the emperor Constantine Pogonatus presided: the Monothelite heresy was anathematized; and its several abettors were condemned, among whom was Honorius a bishop of Rome. A certain proof that infallibility was neither allowed nor pretended to at that time by the Italian prelate. For the legates of Agathon, who was then bishop of Rome, were at the council, nor do we find that any opposition was made by them or by their master to the condemnation of Honorius.

If we compare the East and the West during this century, we shall see a very striking difference. In England true godliness shone for a considerable part of it: in France there was a good measure of piety; and from these two countries divine truth made its way into Germany and the north with glorious success. In Italy the Lombards were more and more cleared of Arianism; and though there arose no bishop of Rome to be compared at all to Gregory, yet the purity of the faith was preserved by them all, in point of theological speculation, except one. And his condemnation, which we have just seen, demonstrates, that Antichrist had not yet arrived at maturity. Infallibility was not then thought of, as attached to the person of the Roman prelate. His power indeed was much too great; so was his pomp and influence. But it was the same with the bishops of other great Sees: and the bishop of Constantinople retains the title of universal bishop to this day. Nor had the bishop of Rome any temporal dominion, nor did he pretend to any. In fine, the most decisive marks of Antichrist, idolatry and false doctrine, had not yet appeared at Rome. 6u-

persecution and vice were lamentably on the increase in the West, though a considerable degree of true piety prevailed, and some gracious effusions of the Spirit of God appeared.

The influences of divine grace seem to have been withheld, in the East, entirely. Men had there filled up the measure of their iniquities. Even from Origen's days a decline of true doctrine, and the spirit of sceptical philosophy, ever hostile to that of grace, kept them low in religion compared with their western brethren. How precious must the grace of the gospel be, which, being revived in Europe, in the time of Augustine, ceased not to produce salutary effects, and to extend true religion even to the most savage nations! Attempts indeed to propagate, what they called christianity, were made in the East by the Nestorians, who dwelt in Persia and India, and by the Eutychians, who flourished in Egypt. The former were particularly successful in increasing their numbers; but I have nothing to produce of real godliness as the result of the labours of either party. Abyssinia, which from the days of Athanasius, always considered herself as a daughter of Alexandria, receives thence her pontiff to this day: when Eutychianism prevailed in Egypt, it did so of course in Abyssinia, and has been the prevalent form ever since the seventh century in both countries. The Mahometan conquerors reduced the ancient professors of orthodoxy into a state of extreme insignificance; and this was one of the scourges of God by the Arabian imposture, namely, that heretics were encouraged and protected by those conquerors, while the orthodox were crushed. Orthodox patriarchs existed indeed in Egypt for some time after the Saracen conquest. But ignorance, superstition, and immorality, still abounded, and have now continued to abound for many centuries. The East, whence the light first arose, has long sat in darkness, with the exception of some individuals from age to age, such as John the Almoner and a few others, who have been mentioned in this chapter. God will have a church upon earth, and it shall be carried to the most despised regions rather than extinguished entirely. And there is a voice which speaks to Europe in these works of his providence in a louder tone than I know how to describe.

Africa fell under the power of the Mahometans toward the close of this century. It had long shared in the general corruption, and it shared in the general punishment. The region, which has so often refreshed us with evangelical light and energy, where Cyprian suffered, and where Augustine taught, was consigned to Mahometan darkness, and must henceforth be very nearly dismissed from these memoirs.

CHAPTER IV.

AUTHORS OF THIS CENTURY.^b

Isidore, of Sevil, flourished in the former part of it: he governed the church of Sevil for forty years, having succeeded his brother Leander, of whom we have made honourable mention already. This writer was voluminous, and, with all due allowance for the superstition of the age, appears to have been sincerely pious. But perhaps the most useful part of his works is his collection of sentences out of Gregory.* He seems to have been providentially given to Spain, in order to preserve some of the ancient learning, and to prevent men from sinking into total ignorance and rusticity.

Columban must be mentioned also as an author, though we have already celebrated him in the character in which he shone far more, namely, of a missionary. He was, no doubt, pious and fervent: he wrote monastic rules, and while every part of his writings is infected with the servile genius of the times and the spirit of bondage, which had seized the church, one sentence retrieves his character, and with it I shall dismiss him. "We must have recourse to Christ the fountain of life." Sophronius of Jerusalem wrote a synodal letter to confute the Monothelites. His part in that controversy has been stated already. He asserted that we shall rise with the same body, and that the punishments of hell are eternal. The most remarkable thing in him, is the soundness of his doctrine, which he adorned with genuine piety and purity of life.

Martin, bishop of Rome, whose sufferings from the tyrant Constans have been succinctly described, was one of the greatest men of the age. Some of his letters are extant, and they indicate both strength of mind, and zeal in religion. Amandus, bishop of Utrecht, in writing to him, declared, that he was so grieved to find some clergymen to have lived lasciviously after their ordination, that he was tempted to quit his bishopric. Martin dissuaded him; and at the same time exhorted him to exercise salutary discipline on the offenders, declaring, that such clergymen should be deposed entirely from the sacerdotal function, that they may repent in a private condition, and may find mercy at the last day. He exhorts Amandus to undergo patiently all trials for the salvation of the sheep, and the service of God. This Roman prelate, doubtless, was sincere, and he appears to have defended evangelical truth with much firmness. And it was for a branch of scriptural doctrine, that he suffered with consistency and integrity.

^b Du Pin, Cent. 7.

I mention Maximus, his fellow-sufferer in the same cause. His writings are too scholastical to merit much attention, though he was, doubtless, a very able reasoner, and, what is infinitely better, a pious and upright man.

I might swell this list, with the names of

writers little known, and of little use. Learning was very low: the taste of the age was barbarous: we have seen, however, that Christ had then a church, and the reader, if he please, may travel through still darker scenes; yet I trust some glimmerings of the presence of Christ will appear.

CENTURY VIII.

CHAPTER I.

VENERABLE BEDE, THE ENGLISH PRESBYTER.

THE church-history of our country, written by this renowned father, was continued to the year 731. I have extracted from it that which suited my purpose. He is said to have died in 735. Of his age the accounts are very contradictory. The history of the century will properly begin with a brief narrative of the life and works of this historian.

He was born near Durham, in a village now called Farrow, near the mouth of the Tyne. Losing both his parents at the age of seven years, he was, by the care of relations, placed in the monastery of Weremouth, was there educated with much strictness, and appears from his youth to have been devoted to the service of God. He was afterwards removed to the neighbouring monastery of Jarrow, where he ended his days. He was looked on as the most learned man of his time. Prayer, writing, and teaching, were his familiar employments during his whole life.* He was ordained deacon in the nineteenth, and presbyter in the thirtieth year of his age. He gave himself wholly to the study of the Scripture, the instruction of disciples, the offices of public worship, and the composition of religious and literary works. The life of such a person can admit of little variety. It was not, however, for want of opportunity, that he lived thus obscure. His character was celebrated through the western world: the bishop of Rome invited him warmly to the metropolis of the church; but, in the eyes of Bede, the great world had no charms. It does not appear that he ever left England; and, however infected with the fashionable devotion to the Roman See, he was evidently sincere and disinterested.

Constantly engaged in reading or writing,

* Life of Bede, prefixed to his works. Cologne edition.

he made all his studies subservient to devotion. As he was sensible, that it is by the grace of God rather than by natural faculties that the most profitable knowledge of the Scriptures is acquired, he mixed prayer with his studies. He never knew what it was to do nothing. He wrote on all the branches of knowledge then cultivated in Europe. In Greek and Hebrew he had a skill very uncommon in that barbarous age; and, by his instructions and example, he raised up many scholars. Knowledge indeed in those times was more familiar in the British Isles than in any part of Europe.

The catalogue of Bede's works exhibits the proofs of his amazing industry. His Church-history is to us the most valuable, because it is the only British monument of the church which we have for the seventh century. His expositions and homilies, however, must in that dearth of knowledge have been abundantly useful. The ignorance of the times is indeed but too visible in him; and he followed Augustine and other fathers so closely, and collected so much from various authors, that his want of original genius is more than problematical. Genuine godliness, rather than taste and genius, appear on the face of his writings. His labours in the sciences shew a love of learning, however inconsiderable his acquisitions must appear, in comparison with the attainments of the present age.

In his last sickness he was afflicted with a difficulty of breathing for two weeks. His mind was, however, serene and cheerful; his affections were heavenly; and, amidst these infirmities, he daily taught his disciples. A great part of the night was employed in prayer and thanksgiving; and the first employment of the morning was to ruminate on the Scriptures, and to address his God in prayer. "God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," was frequently in his mouth.

Even amidst his bodily weakness he was employed in writing two little treatises

Perceiving his end to draw near, he said, "If my Maker please, I will go to him from the flesh, who, when I was not, formed me out of nothing.—My soul desires to see Christ my King in his beauty." He sung glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and expired with a sedateness, composure, and devotion, that amazed all, who saw and heard.

This is the account of his death by one of his disciples; and a very few quotations from his expository writings will shew on what solid grounds these religious affections were founded. In expounding Acts ii. 28. "thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance;" he says, "These things are not only to be understood of our Lord, who needed no other guide to overcome the kingdom of death, but having received at once the fulness of divine strength and wisdom, was able to conquer death by himself, rise again to life, and ascend to his Father, but also of his elect, who, by his gift, find the well of life, by which they rise to the bliss, which they lost in Adam, and shall be filled with heavenly joy. This shall be our perfect bliss, when we shall see him face to face. Philip knew this well when he said, 'Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' That pleasure of seeing the face of God sufficeth: there shall be nothing more; nor is there a call for any thing more, when he is seen, who is above all."^a

"Other innumerable methods of saving men being set aside, this was selected by infinite wisdom, namely, that, without any diminution of his divinity, he assumed also humanity, and in humanity procured so much good to men, that temporal death, though not due from him, was yet paid, to deliver them from eternal death, which was due from them. Such was the efficacy of that blood, that the devil who slew Christ by a temporary death, which was not due, cannot detain in eternal death any of those who are clothed with Christ, though that eternal death be due for their sins."^a

Such were the evangelical views, which, in a night of superstition, burst forth from the northern extremity of England. But the doctrines revived by Augustine flourished still in Europe in a good degree, though in no part more than in the British isles. Monastic superstition grew, indeed, excessively among our fathers at the same time, and, in the end, entirely corrupted the doctrines themselves. But that was not yet the case: superstition itself, though deplorable childish and absurd, was not incompati-

ble with sincerity and the fear of God. The real nature of the gospel, and its practical exercise in faith, humility, and true mortification of sin, were understood and felt by the Saxon presbyter, whose comments on St. Paul's epistles are, in depth of understanding, and penetration into the sacred sense, even with all the defects of the times, greatly superior to several admired expositions of this, which calls itself an enlightened age.

The seventh chapter to the Romans may deservedly be called a touchstone of spiritual understanding. Too many modern divines, by supposing that the Apostle is only describing the conflict between reason and passion, after the manner of the ancient philosophers, have demonstrated their own total ignorance of St. Paul's argument. He only, who feels, abhors, and sincerely struggles with indwelling sin, who is conscious of its unutterable malignity, and is humbled under this conviction, can understand the Apostle aright, and prize the real grace of God in Jesus Christ. Such was Bede: the very best expositors in the most evangelical times do not much exceed him, in clearness and solidity, in the exposition of this chapter. I will not delay the reader by quoting largely from his explication. Suffice it to give a hint or two. He observes, from the Apostle, that the desire of sinning itself is increased by the prohibitions of the law, which therefore increases sin, without giving any strength; and the purport of this part of the divine economy is, that men groaning under the law might come to the Mediator. He strongly contends, that the wretched carnal person, sold under sin, in this chapter, was no personated character, but Paul himself, and he confirms this by observing, from the epistle to the Philippians, that the Apostle confessed "he was not perfect, and had not attained unto the resurrection of the dead:" and from another epistle, that he was even buffeted by Satan, and had a thorn in his flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure. This inward warfare, our author contends, must last through life. "In the resurrection, every thing," says he, "shall be perfected. In the mean time it is a great thing to keep the field, and remain unconquered, though not discharged from war."

But though he fully reached the scope of Augustine, from whose labours he profited abundantly, he seems never to go beyond it. Indeed his expositions are extracts and compilations from the fathers, chiefly from Augustine. In this sense they were his own, that he understood and experienced their truth and efficacy. But judgment and industry, not genius and invention, were the talents of this writer. Though the thought I am going to mention is most probably not his own, yet it gives so instructive a view of

^a Retractat. on Acts of the Apostles. I cannot prevail on myself to omit this passage, though the expression of Philip be not so pertinent to the purpose of the author, as some other portions of Scripture might have been.

On Rom. v.

the state of all mankind ranked in four classes, that I cannot prevail on myself to withhold it from the reader. Speaking of the conflict with indwelling sin, described in Rom. vii, he observes, "that there are those who fight not at all, and are drawn away by their lusts; others who fight indeed, but are overcome, because they fight without faith, and in their own strength; others who fight, and are still in the field, not overcome, which was the case of St. Paul and all true christians in this world; and lastly, others who have overcome and are at rest above." Bede, like Augustine, allegorizes to excess, and is very often desultory and vague in his comments: his views of Solomon's song are solid, though in the explication too minute: still more faulty perhaps are his expositions on the tabernacle and on Solomon's temple. His homilies, at the time, must have been very edifying, notwithstanding the puerile fancies, with which they are discoloured. On the whole, I shall venture to observe, what, however, no reader will be prepared to receive, unless his mind has been seasoned with a degree of experimental religion, that the comments of Bede are far more solid and judicious than those of many modern, improperly called rational divines; though in the former the errors of fanciful allegory abound, in the latter an air of strict and accurate argumentation every where appear. The reason is, because the former, being possessed of the true meaning of the Apostle on the whole, supports and illustrates it throughout, though he fails in detached passages because of the desultory ebullitions of a vicious taste, which predominated in his time; the latter with "semblance of worth, not substance," are accurate and just in many particulars, but from their system of notions, which is extremely opposite to that of St. Paul, mislead their readers altogether, in regard to the main drift of the argument.

A year before our presbyter's death, he wrote a letter to Egbert, archbishop of York, which deserves to be immortalized for the solid sense, which it exhibits, a quality, with which Bede was very eminently endowed.*

"Above all things," says he, "avoid useless discourse, and apply yourself to the Holy Scriptures, especially the epistles to Timothy and Titus; to Gregory's pastoral care, and his homilies on the gospel.—It is indecent for him, who is dedicated to the service of the church, to give way to actions or discourse unsuitable to his character. Have always those about you, who may assist you in temptation: be not like some bishops, who love to have those about them, who love good cheer, and divert them with trifling and facetious conversation.

Your diocese is too large to allow you to

go through the whole in a year; therefore appoint presbyters, in each village, to instruct and administer the sacraments; and let them be studious that every one of them may learn, by heart, the Creed and the Lord's prayer; and that, if they do not understand Latin, they may repeat them in their own tongue. I have translated them into English, for the benefit of ignorant presbyters. I am told, that there are many villages in our nation, in the mountainous parts, the inhabitants of which have never seen a bishop or pastor; and yet they are obliged to pay their dues to the bishop.

The best means to reform our Church, is to increase the number of bishops: who sees not, how much more reasonable it is for numbers to share this burden? Gregory therefore directed Augustine to appoint twelve bishops to be under the archbishop of York, as their metropolitan. I wish you would fill up this number, with the assistance of the king of Northumberland."

"I know it is not easy to find an empty place for the erection of a bishopric. You may choose some monastery for the purpose.—In truth, there are many places, which have the name of monasteries without deserving it."—He goes on to shew how, for thirty years past, the scandalous abuse of monasteries had prevailed, and how useless many of them were to church and state, as they preserved neither piety nor decency. He directs Egbert to see that his flock be instructed in christian faith and practice, and that they frequently attend on the communion. He finds fault with the excessive multiplication of monks, and expresses his fears, lest, in process of time, the state should be destitute of soldiers to repel an invasion. This last observation is of a piece with another at the close of his history, that many Northumbrians in his days, both nobles and private men, employed themselves and their children more in monastic vows than in the exercise of arms. "What effect this will have," says he, "the next generation will bear witness." It is no common instance of judgment in one who had always been a monk, to notice these evils. How they happened to be so very fashionable in our island, it is not hard to account for. Our ancestors were, doubtless, much indebted under God to the Roman See. Christianity, before the missions of Gregory, was very low in England. A real spirit of godliness, the sincere practice and true understanding of the gospel, had been, through the bishops of Rome, introduced among barbarians. Even the benefits thence resulting

* His name was Cédulph. Two years after Bede's death, he gave up his crown and lived twenty-two years in a monastery. His mind was most probably truly devout, though the spirit of the times led him into a degenerate method of shewing it.

† Even kings gave themselves up to retirements of this kind, and there want not instances, among the Saxon princes, of pilgrimages to Rome of a religious nature.

to society must have been great. Gratitude and affection would naturally lead our ancestors, in those superstitious ages, to monastic excesses. And if the evils, of which Bede complains, be strong proofs of the superstitious taste, they are also of the spirit of piety which subsisted among them. While Bede lived, in no part of the world was godliness better understood and practised, than among our ancestors. In a synod held by Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, about the middle of this century, at Cloveshoe,¹ there were twelve prelates, with Ethelbald, king of the Mercians. The canons of this synod would have done honour to the purest times, and they seem to have been inspired by the genius of Bede. The clergy are directed to have fellowship with one another, to serve God in one spirit of faith, hope, and charity, to pray for one another, to attend to the duties of the sabbath, and, in fine, the same things are repeated, which are to be found in Bede's letter to Egbert.

Let us not pride ourselves in a fancied superiority to our forefathers: a vanity of this sort seems to be the disease of the present age;—but men were not all without understanding in those dark seasons. The indiscriminating censures of Mosheim on whole centuries, seem to shew more malignity than discernment. Bede alone knew more of true religion, both doctrinal and practical, than numbers of ecclesiastics put together at this day; which will clearly appear, if we do but free him from superstitious rubbish, and examine what he is inter-
nally.

CHAPTER II.

MISCELLANEOUS PARTICULARS.

A LITTLE after the beginning of this century, Lambert, bishop of Maestricht, was murdered. He had succeeded Theodard, under whom he had been educated, and, for forty years, had adorned the gospel by a life of piety and charity. He had been seven years deprived of his See amidst the civil confusions of France, but had been re-established about the year 681. This prelate had exerted himself with much zeal in his diocese, and laboured with success in the conversion of the pagans who were in his neighbourhood. His patience, as well as his doctrine, had a salutary effect. It is not, however, in the power of the wisest and best of men, to restrain the tempers of their friends and relations. Two brothers, Gallus and Riold, were intolerably violent in plundering the church of Maestricht, and infesting the neigh-

bourhood. Lambert's relations, particularly two nephews, returned evil for evil, and slew them, much against the will of the bishop. Doubtless, the brothers ought to have applied to the civil magistrate, though justice was at that time very ill administered in France. Dodo, a powerful baron of the neighbourhood, a relation of the robbers, was determined to revenge their deaths upon the bishop himself; and he attacked him with armed men at Leodium¹ upon the Muse. Lambert, in his first agitation upon the news of their approach seized a sword, but recollecting himself, and lifting up his heart to God in prayer, he laid aside the sword, and composed himself to suffer. Two of his nephews began to make resistance. "If you love me truly," said Lambert, "love Jesus Christ also, and confess your sins to him. As for me, it is time for me to go to live with him." "Do you not hear," said another nephew, "how they call out to set fire to the house, to burn us all alive?" Remember, replied the bishop calmly, the guilt of the murder is yours: submit to receive the due recompence of your deeds. He continued in fervent prayer, and the armed men put all whom they found to the sword, and Lambert himself among the rest. A man of a christian spirit surely, and worthy of a more enlightened age, in which his humility, piety, and charity might have shone with a brighter lustre!

Ceolfred, in the early part of this century, governed the two monasteries of Weremouth and Jerrow, which had educated Bede. Through his influence, the Picts, who inhabited North Britain, were brought over to the Roman mode of celebrating Easter, and of course to the Roman communion.² But I can find no account of any progress in piety in the British isles. As the Roman church itself grew more corrupt in this century, our ancestors were infected with a larger portion of its superstitions.

In the year 713, the Mahometans passed over from Africa into Spain, and put an end to the kingdom of the Goths, which had lasted near three hundred years. The christians were there reduced to slavery; and thus were scourged those wicked professors, who had long held the truth in unrighteousness, called on the name of Christ, while in works they denied him, and buried his faith under an enormous heap of superstitions. A remnant, however, preserved their independency in the Asturian mountains, who chose Pelagius for their king, a person descended from the royal family. He expressed his hope, that after God had chastised them for their sins, he would not give them up wholly to the Mahometans. His confidence in God

¹ Now Liege. Fleury Xli. 16.

² Egbert, an Englishman, not long after, effected the same change among many of the Irish.

³ New Chis, near Rochester. Warner.

was not disappointed. Under circumstances extremely disadvantageous, he defeated the enemy, re-peopled the cities, rebuilt the churches, and, by the pious assistance of several pastors, supported the gospel in one district of Spain, while the greatest part of the country was overrun by the Arabians. But the successors of Pelagius, by degrees, recovered more cities from the enemy.

Christendom, at this time, afforded a very grievous and mournful spectacle. Idolatry itself was now spreading widely both in Europe and in Asia, among the professors of the gospel: "men had very commonly every where forsaken the faith and the precepts of Jesus, in all those countries, which had been long evangelized. The people who served the Lord in the greatest purity and sincerity, seem to have been other ancestors," and the inhabitants of some other regions, which had but lately received the gospel. So true is the observation, which our history constantly gives as occasion to make, namely, that there is a perpetual tendency in human nature to degeneracy and corruption. Such, however, was the goodness of God, that he still exercised much long suffering amidst the most provoking enormities; and after he had removed the candlestick from some churches, he carried it to other places," so that the light of his gospel was never removed from the earth. The most marvellous event in such cases, is, that men seem not at all conscious of their crimes, nor perceive the avenging hand of God upon them. For the nominal christians of the day were insensible of their condition; and, though the Arabians were evidently making large strides toward universal dominion, it was not till they had advanced into the heart of France, and ravaged that country in a dreadful manner, that any strong efforts were made to withstand them. In the year 732, however, they were totally defeated near Poitiers, by the heroic Charles Martel. An event memorable in history, because by it the providence of God stopped the progress of the Arabian locusts. It is astonishing, that all the civilized nations had not long ago united in a league, which would have been equally just and prudent, to stem the torrent, which threatened the desolation of mankind. Those who had, for ages, trusted more in relics, altars, austerities, pilgrimages, than in Christ crucified, and had lived in deceit, avarice, and uncleanness, were suffered to yield

themselves a prey to devouring invaders. Adored by that Providence, which, in the crisis, preserved Europe from complete desolation, and, by saving France from those barbarians, has still left a people to serve God in these western regions."

CHAPTER III

THE CONTROVERSY ON IMAGES. THE NATURE OF ANTICHRIST.

In the year 737, the Greek emperor began open hostility with the bishop of Rome, and, to use the words of Sigonius,¹ Rome and the Roman dukedom passed from the Greek to the Roman bishop. It would have been more accurate to say, that a foundation was then laid for the temporal power of that prelate, than that it was actually established. However, as it was established a few years after, and a rupture commenced at the period just mentioned, I shall assume this as the most proper date, that I know of, for the beginning of popedom, which from this time is to be regarded as Antichrist indeed; for it set itself by temporal power to support false doctrine, and particularly that, which deserves the name of idolatry.

The marvellous propensity of all ages to the sin of idolatry, which implies a departure of the heart from the one living and true God, must originate in some steady principles existing in the nature of fallen man. The true account of this extraordinary and lamentable fact seems to be as follows.—God is an immaterial, self-existent Being, of infinite power and goodness, and, as our Maker and Preserver, he has an unquestionable claim to our supreme veneration and affection. Man, considered as a rational creature, is endowed with faculties abundantly sufficient for the discovery of this great and perfect Being, so far as his own duties and interests are concerned. This has frequently been proved by able moralists, in the way of argument, and is expressly affirmed to be the case, by St. Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where it is said, that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," and where it is added "that they are without excuse."

In fact, however, fallen man has never, by the mere use of his reason, found out

¹ This important event will be explained in the next chapter.

² Ireland, which Frideaux calls the prime seat of learning in all Christendom, during the reign of Charlemagne, was peculiarly distinguished in this century. Usher has proved the name of Scotia to have been appropriated to Ireland at this time. Eginhard, the secretary of Charlemagne, calls Hibernia Scotorum insula. Several of these Scots (Irish) laboured in the vineyard in Charlemagne's time, and were made bishops in Germany. Both sacred and profane learning were taught by them with success.

³ This will be illustrated in Chap. IV.

⁴ The plague of the locusts, Rev. ix. continued five months, that is, 150 years, a day being reckoned for a year in prophetic language. It may be difficult to reckon exactly the time of the extinction of the Arabian conquest, because of the inaccuracy and confusion of historians. But divine truth was faster to descend, and under every possible way of computation, the period of about 120 years will properly limit the duration of the Saracen conquests.

⁵ Sigon. Hist. de Rega. Italia, B. III.

God to any good purpose, and worshipped him accordingly; and even when God by special revelation has condescended to explain and manifest his true character to a particular people, few of that people have served him as they ought to have done for any great length of time; but they soon corrupted the divine religion, and were plunged in idolatry.

The Jehovah of the sacred writings, and the Almighty and all-perfect God, which may be discovered by sound reason, is an invisible Being, and is to be honoured, as a Spirit, with the heart and the understanding, and without the intervention of sensible objects, as stocks or stones. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul:" but the history of our corrupted nature shews, that images and other sensible objects have, in all ages, offered themselves to men's minds as guides and helps to a conception of the Deity; and if, in some instances, these absurd inventions of gross idolatry have been rejected by men of learning and refinement, it has then generally happened, that intellectual signments of philosophical vanity have been substituted in their place, signments still more atheistical in their nature, and farther removed from the notion of a wise and authoritative Governor of the Universe, who enjoins the submission and dependence of his creatures, requires their obedience, and dispenses justice impartially.

The principles, which appear to account for this apostasy and opposition to the divine Will, may be comprehended under the terms pride, self-love, self-righteousness, and desire of independence, or, indeed, under the single term pride alone, if we use that expression according to its most extensive application. Fallen man is too proud, practically, to feel and confess his relative ignorance and inanity, when compared with the Supreme Author of all things; and the same principle prevents him from placing his supreme regard and esteem on God, though reason dictate, and revelation command this duty. He loves himself and his own gratifications too well. Then it is easy to understand, that pride and self-righteousness are nearly synonymous expressions: a proud Being will never esteem his own "righteousnesses as filthy rags." (Isaiah liiv. 6.): will never cordially beg for pardon of his sins: he has too good an opinion of his own labours, inventions, and performances; in a word, he is self-righteous; and, in a similar way, it is plain, that the same Being will sin at independence, and be impatient of control. In such a dangerous and corrupt state of human affections, the broad and crowded road to idolatry, which is the object we are seeking, is not difficult to be traced. For, whether we consider pride as

a comprehensive principle, evolving itself according to the explanation just given, in various mischievous operations; or, whether we choose to confine the meaning of the term, no one will doubt, but that, in fact, mankind in all ages have been grievously wanting in humility, have proudly set themselves up against God, have been actuated by inordinate self-love, and not submitting to the righteous obscurity of God, have endeavoured to establish their own righteousness, and have been impatient of control. The existence of these principles and inclinations implies an absolute departure of the heart from the living God; and when that has once taken place through the action of some steady cause, the progress to idolatry, or to some species of atheism, nearly allied to idolatry, is the next step. Man has departed from the true God; and there must be some device to quiet conscience. Thus, in rude and barbarous times, the proud, self-righteous devotee, will naturally have recourse to the sottish invention of the worship of wood, or stone, or metals, and become a gross idolater. He will burn part of the wood with fire, and of the rest he will make a god, and kneel before it. The discovery mightily pleases him: he has found out a god exactly suited to his taste; a god, who will easily pardon his vices, set a high value on his imagined virtues, and be constantly propitious to him; a god, who is not an universal Governor or Benefactor, but who is particularly kind to himself and his countrymen; a god, whom he can see and handle, and in which he may pride himself, as having contrived and finished it with the tongs and hammer, or with the plane and compass; a god, which is local and tutelar, and over which he himself has considerable power: he can place it in his temple, in his chamber, or in the camp.

The ancient idolaters often represented by their images, deceased chiefs, or heroes, or kings, who were still supposed to possess a superintending influence over the affairs of men; and, not unfrequently, these departed beings appear to have ranked among the most wicked of mankind. In more modern times, even christianity itself has been disgraced with the adoration of images, representations, and reliques of saints; nor has the abominable superstition always sufficiently taken care, that the supposed saints themselves should have been reputable characters.

In ages of great learning and refinement, the same principles of pride, &c, which in religious concerns, blinding the understanding and corrupting the affections, effectually draw the heart from the living and true God, induce men to profess a reverence for abstruse and intellectual signments, as nature, a principle of order, or the soul of the universe. These notions of God, which pro-

vail in polished seasons of the world, in one sense merit the imputation of idolatry, in another of atheism; and, in any possible interpretation, they must be deemed equivocal, unintelligible, and pernicious. The species of idolatry are exceedingly various; but they differ not much either in their source or their tendency. In all circumstances man is miserable and blind, if he be not seeking and worshipping the true God in spirit and truth. If, in breach of the second commandment, he represent the glory of Jehovah by images, or if, in breach of the first, he set up a divinity opposite to Jehovah, in both cases he forms a deceitful basis for salvation and happiness, and directly affronts the perfections of God. Such practices are, therefore, forbidden throughout the Scripture, in the most positive manner.

The guilt of idolatry is not so apparent to natural conscience, as that of crimes committed against our fellow-creatures; though no sin is so much spoken against through the Old Testament. Many are apt to wonder why the Israelites were so prone to it; not considering nor knowing their own idolatry, which works in a way more suited to present times and circumstances. But whoever understands, that idolatry implies the departure of the heart from the living God and a fixing of it on something else; that to refuse to trust his word, and to choose to put confidence in some sensible object, by which we would represent him to our minds,—still further, to glory in our own strength and righteousness, instead of seeking salvation by grace through faith only, proceeds from pride, and pours all possible contempt on the divine Majesty, will not wonder at God's indignation against this sin, will see how naturally it operates on the human mind, and how it affords a complete demonstration of the apostacy of man.

The ancient church of God were distinguished from the nations all around by the most express prohibitions of this sin. They were directed not to worship any but the living God, nor even Jehovah himself by any images whatever; much less were they allowed to worship any creature by representations, which would be to break the two first commandments by the same act. He, who knows the propensity of his own heart to distrust the providence and grace of God, and how eagerly we catch at any human relief, instead of patiently waiting upon God in trouble, will not wonder that the Israelites worshipped the calf in the absence of Moses, nor think the sin small, because they intended to honour Jehovah by the symbol.

Under the gospel-dispensation the prohibition of images continued, and, in the purest times, there was little occasion to dwell on the subject. God in Christ was worshipped, and in truth, by the primitive christians:

and, while they called on the Gentiles to turn from their idols to the living God, idolatry itself, in any of its forms, could scarce find a shadow of admission into the christian church.

For, while men's hearts were filled with peace and joy in believing, while the doctrines of justification and regeneration were precious and all-important in their eyes, and they lived by the faith of Jesus, saw his glory, and felt in their souls the transforming power of his grace, the deceitful aids of idolatry had no charms. It was not till the knowledge of the gospel itself was darkened and adulterated, that the miserable spirits of men had recourse to such vain refuges, and that the mind, no longer under the influence of the Holy Spirit, betook itself to the arts of sculpture and painting, in order to inflame its affections, and to kindle a false fire of devotion. Christians then worshipped the true God with the understanding, and whoever was converted to the faith, ceased from idolatry. And, as we have seen, christian emperors, particularly Theodosius, destroyed image-worship in their dominions. Origen, in his treatise against Celsus, observes, that it is not possible, than any, by worshipping images, should attain the knowledge of God. Athanasius and Lactantius⁴ strongly inculcate the same truth. Toward the end of the fourth century some approach toward this evil appeared in the church. Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, observes, that he found a linen cloth hanging on the church-door painted, and having in it the image of Christ, or of some saint. "Observing this," says he, "so contrary to the authority of the scriptures, I tore the cloth." The famous Jerom published, in Latin, an epistle of Epiphanius concerning this subject, and added his own testimony on the point. So evident is it, that at that time images were absolutely prohibited in the church of Christ.

Augustine also gave his opinion against images. "They are of more force to pervert the soul than to instruct it." And "when images are once placed in temples, and had in honours, error creepeth in." Men, however, who had been lately turned from idols, began at length to paint or carve images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Apostles; and Jerom observes, that the errors of images passed to the Christians from the Gentiles; and Eusebius, the historian, says, that images of Peter and Paul, and of our Saviour himself, were made in his time,

⁴ In the three Homilies of the Church of England against the idolatry, the controversy is handled with much solidity and historical information. I have made some use of them for my purpose. It seems proper that every protestant divine should acquaint himself with the fundamentals of the controversy, and be able satisfactorily to convince himself, that popery is not what it pretends to be, founded on the precedents of christian antiquity.

See Page 290.

which he took "to be an heathenish custom." They were not, however, worshipped, nor publicly set up in churches. Paulinus, who died bishop of Nola in the year 431, caused the walls of a temple to be painted with stories taken from the Old Testament, that the people might thence receive instruction: the written word was neglected, and these poor substitutes were placed in its room. A strong sign of the growing ignorance! As the ignorance increased, these historical paintings and images increased also. Servanus, bishop of Marseilles, because of the danger of idolatry, broke to pieces the images then set up in the churches. And I have already noticed the imprudent concession made by Gregory, bishop of Rome, on this occasion, to the growing superstition. Thus, six hundred years after Christ, images had begun to appear in churches, but still without idolatry. The authority of Gregory, however, had evil consequences: the spirit of idolatry grew stronger, as real spiritual knowledge decayed; and men, having now much lost the divine way of applying to God through Christ, by faith, for the relief of their consciences, became still more prone to rely on idols. So closely connected is the doctrine of justification with purity of worship. In this respect the Roman Church advanced in corruption more rapidly than the eastern. And Grecian emperors employed themselves in destroying images and pictures, while in Italy they were held in idolatrous admiration. The evil, in truth, became incurable, because there was no clear and effectual knowledge of the Gospel, that might dissipate the clouds of error. Yet were men's opinions divided both in the east and the west; and, at length, the crisis arose, when the christian world was formally broken into two parties on this question.

We are now advanced to the year 727, when Leo, the Isaurian, the Greek emperor, began openly to oppose the worship of images, and produced the rupture with the Roman See, before mentioned. A Syrian, born of christian parents, named Beser, who had been taken by the Mahometans, and afterwards returned to the Romans, had imbibed an opinion of the unlawfulness of the practice, having, very probably, observed the advantage which it had given to the infidels. He was in great favour with the emperor, and convinced him by his arguments, that image-worship was idolatrous. But the most eminent defender of the purity of divine worship in this point, and whom Fleury therefore, in his popish zeal, calls the author of the heresy,¹ was Constantine, bishop of Nacolia in Phrygia. Convinced in his judgment, and zealous to propagate what appear-

ed to him to be right, Leo assembled the people, and with the frankness and sincerity, which marks his character, publicly avowed his conviction of the idolatry of the growing practice, and declared that images ought not to be erected for adoration. Such a declaration in the sixth century would have raised no ferment in christendom; but idolatry had been gradually advancing itself, as the simplicity and purity of christian faith had decayed: men of no religious solicitude naturally conformed themselves to the habits of the times, and persons of some concern for the soul had been so long trammelled in a variety of superstitions for the relief of conscience, and the true relief of Christ's atonement was so little understood and relished, that the emperor was evidently in the minority through the christian world. As yet no synods had given a sanction to image-worship. Precedents of antiquity were entirely against it. The word of God, which ought to have influenced the minds of men infinitely more than either, was in full opposition to the practice; but so deeply had error prevailed; so convenient did wicked men find it to commute for the indulgence of their crimes, by a zealous attachment to the idolatrous externals; and so little was the Scripture then read or studied, that the subjects of Leo murmured against him, as a tyrant and a persecutor. Even Germanus, the bishop of Constantinople, with equal zeal and ignorance asserted, that images had always been used in the church, and declared his determination to oppose the emperor at all events. It is not necessary to give a detail of the paltry evasions and frivolous arguments, with which he endeavoured to support the idolatry. Desirous, however, of strengthening himself against the emperor, he wrote to the bishop of Rome, who warmly supported the same cause, and by reasonings of the same nature. Never was a more instructive lesson given to pastors, to teach the word of God in simplicity and faithfulness. Conscience will be disquieted at times in men not altogether given up to a reprobate mind; and, if peace by Jesus Christ, through faith alone, be not sedulously preached, men distressed for their sins will flee to idolatry with all their might, which will give them a false peace, and confirm them in sinful practices. By the knowledge of Christ crucified alone, can we be brought to a sound peace of conscience, and be constrained effectually to serve God and our neighbour in love. We have often seen this connection of doctrine and practice in the course of this history, and we are now stating the reverse of the picture. Nor can the spirit and principles of those christians, who supported divine truth in the world, be so clearly understood without some knowledge of the real grounds of popery.

¹ I say the Roman; for in other parts of the west, we shall see, that some opposition was made to idolatry.

² Fleury, B. XLII. l. Vol. V.

He who filled the Roman See at that time was Gregory the second, whom for his open defence and support of idolatry, I shall venture to call the first POPE of Rome. Many superstitions and abuses had been growing ;^{*} and since the decease of Gregory I., I have for the most part been silent concerning the Roman bishops, because very little of godliness appeared among them. The most honourable part of their conduct related to the encouragement of missions and the propagation of the gospel among the Gentiles ; in which, many, who were actuated by the same spirit as those, who had been sent by Gregory I., were successful in their provinces ; and pure religion, in the fundamentals, at least, was extended into distant regions, while Rome and Italy grew more and more corrupt. The open avowal, however, of idolatry, was reserved for Gregory II., and from this time I look on the bishops of Rome as Antichrist.

Rebellion trode on the heels of idolatry. Greece and its neighbouring islands opposed the emperor, and set up an usurper ; so infatuated were men with image-worship. But the rebels were routed ; and the usurper was taken and beheaded.

Leo has been so blackened by contemporary writers, that it is not easy to form a just idea of his character. The same observation may be extended to his son and successor, on the same account. All that can be advanced with certainty is, that his cause was just, and his zeal sincere, though his temper was too warm. He might be a pious christian ; there is doubtless no proof to the contrary. He not only condemned the worshipping of images, but also rejected relics and the intercession of saints. But there

lived none at that time capable of doing justice to the holiness of his motives, if indeed, as there is reason to hope, they were holy.

In the year 730 he published an edict against images, and, after having in vain endeavoured to bring over Germanus to his views, he deposed him, and set up Anastasius in his room, who supported the emperor. There was a porch in the palace of Constantinople, in which was an image of Christ on the cross. Leo, who saw that it had been made an engine of idolatry, sent an officer to pull it down. Some women, who were there, intreated that it might be spared, but in vain. The officer mounted a ladder and struck three blows with a hatchet on the face of the figure, when the women threw him down by pulling away the ladder, and murdered him on the spot :[†] however, the image was pulled down and burnt, and a plain cross was set up in its room ; for Leo only objected to the erection of an human figure. The women afterwards insulted Anastasius, as having profaned holy things. Leo put several persons to death, who had been concerned in the murder, and, such was the triumph of idolatry at length, that the murderers are honoured as martyrs, by the Greek Church, to this day ! More blood was spilt on the occasion, partly through the vehemence of the emperor, and partly through the obstinacy of the idolaters.

The news flew to Rome, where the same rage for idolatry prevailed, and the emperor's statues were pulled down, and trodden under foot. Italy was thrown into confusion : serious attempts were made to elect another emperor ; and the pope encouraged these attempts. He also prohibited the Italians from paying tribute to Leo any longer, say the Greek writers, and some of the partizans of the Roman See, while the French writers represent him as endeavouring to quell the rebellion. It is difficult to give a fair statement of Gregory's conduct on this occasion ; certain it is, that his obstinate defence of idolatry actually fomented the rebellion, and, in the end, established the temporal power of his successors on the ruins of the imperial authority.[‡] His conduct was indirectly rebellious, if it was not directly so ; for he wrote to Anastasius, that if he did not return to the catholic faith, he should be deprived of his dignity.[§] Gregory must have known, that this was, in effect, to oppose the emperor himself. This was one of the last acts of the Roman prelate. He was

* One will deserve to be specified, as it marks the decline from evangelical purity of doctrine. It was not until the days of this Gregory, that church-yards had a beginning. The dead had been usually interred near the highways, according to the Roman laws, and christian congregations had followed the practice ; at least, they had burial places remote from the city. But, in Gregory's time, the priests and monks began to offer prayers for the deceased, and received gifts from the relations for the performance of these services ; on which account these ecclesiastics requested leave of Gregory, that the dead might be interred near the places of the monks' abode, or in the churches or monasteries ; that the relations might have a better opportunity of joining in the funeral devotions. Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, introduced the custom into England in 750 ; hence the origin of CHURCH-YARDS in this island used as burial grounds. The practice itself is certainly innocent ; though its first origin was extremely superstitious. The attentive reader will judge hence of the progress of the doctrine of purgatory, and the aversion of the ecclesiastics connected with it ; above all, of men's departure from the theatre of justification ; which, if it had remained in any degree of purity in the Church, would have effectually excluded these abominations. See Newcome's Hist. of the Abbey at St. Albans, p. 109. While men rested in Christ, and dared to behold themselves complete in him, they had no temptation to apply to the false refuges of prayers for the departed. In the article of death they committed their souls and bodies to their Saviour. That hope of glory being lost, they struggled, in vain, through life, with doubts and fears, and departing in uncertainty, left to the charity of friends to eke their supposed defect of merit, and " found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

† This first instance of idolatrous zeal which occurs in Christendom, shews that the worshippers of images naturally connect the idea of sanctity with the wood or stone, and therefore the charge of literally worshipping inanimate matter, which the Scriptures make against pagan idolaters, is just when applied to popish. By an induction from particulars, it were easy to prove, that the cases are similar, and, that futile distinctions and evasions may equally be applied to both, to cover and soften what cannot be vindicated in either.

‡ See Mosheim, Cent. VIII, c. III.

§ Fleury, C. XLII. 7.

metalled by Gregory III. who wrote to the emperor in these arrogant terms. "Because you are unlearned and ignorant, we are obliged to write to you rude discourses, but full of sense and the word of God. We conjure you to quit your pride, and hear us with humility.—You say that we adore stones, walls, and boards. It is not so, my lord; but those symbols make us recollect the persons whose names they bear, and excite our grovelling minds. We do not look upon them as gods;—but if it be the image of Jesus, we say, "Lord, help us." If it be the image of his mother, we say, "pray to your Son to save us." If it be of a martyr, we say, "St. Stephen, pray for us."—We might, as having the power of St. Peter, pronounce punishments against you; but as you have pronounced this curse upon yourself, let it stick to you.—You write to us to assemble a general council; of which there is no need. Do you cease to persecute images, and all will be quiet.—We fear not your threats; for if we go a league from Rome, toward Campania, we are secure."—Certainly this is the language of Antichrist, supporting idolatry by pretences to infallibility, and despising both civil magistrates and ecclesiastical councils.

I cannot do justice to Leo, because we have not his answers to the pope. But perhaps the language of Gregory will enable the reader for himself to vindicate the emperor. It is not to be wondered at, that Leo refused to have any farther intercourse with the Roman prelate. In 782, Gregory, in a council, excommunicated all, who should remove or speak contemptuously of images. And Italy being now in a state of rebellion, Leo fitted out a fleet, which he sent thither; but it was wrecked in the Adriatic. He continued, however, to enforce his edict against images in the east, while the patrons of the fashionable idolatry supported it by various sophisms. In all his conduct Gregory now acted like a temporal prince: he supported a rebellious duke against Luitprand, king of the Lombards, his master, and fearing the vengeance of the latter, he applied to Charles Martel, mayor of the palace in France,* offering to withdraw

his obedience from the emperor, and give the consulship of Rome to Charles, if he would take him under his protection.^a Charles, however, by his wars with the Saracens, was prevented from complying with the pope's request. But he left his power and ambitious views to his son and successor Pepin. Charles, Gregory, and Leo, all died in the same year 741, and left to their successors the management of their respective views and contentions.

Constantine Copronymus inherited his father Leo's zeal against images: and, as both the east and the west were precipitating themselves into idolatry, hence neither of these princes have met with a fair and impartial historian.^b The Arabians persecuted the christians in the mean time with unrelenting barbarity in the east, while the real church of God was desolated on all sides, and suffered equally from enemies without and within her pale. Zachary was the next pope after Gregory III., an aspiring politician, who fomented discord among the Lombards, and, by his intrigues, obtained from their king Luitprand an addition to the patrimony of the church. The Roman prelates had ceased to worship God in spirit and in truth, and were now become mere secular princes.

Zachary shewed how well he merited the title of a temporal governor. He had the address to preserve still a nominal subjection to the Greek emperor, while he seized all the power of the Roman dukedom for himself, and looked out for a protector both against his lawful sovereign and against the Lombards. This was Pepin, the son and successor of Charles Martel in France, who sent a case of conscience to be resolved by the pope, namely, whether it would be just in himself to depose his sovereign Childeric III., and to reign in his room?^c Zachary was not ashamed to answer in the affirmative: Pepin then threw his master into a monastery, and assumed the title of king. Zachary died soon after, viz. in the year 752.

The Greek emperor was unable to cope with the subtlety of the pope and the violence of the Lombards. Ravenna the capital of his dominions in Italy was taken by king Astulphus, who had succeeded Rachis, the successor of Luitprand. This government, called the Exarchate, had lasted in Italy about a hundred and fourscore years.

succession of weak princes, [governed with sovereign power.

^a This shows that the charge of rebellion against the emperor is not unjustly made against this pope.

^b Theophanes relates some ridiculous things of Copronymus, which only prove the strength of his own prejudices, p. 346, and Fleury follows him as his guide.

^c Fleury XLIII. l. calls him a weak and contemptible prince. So the French kings had been for some time. But Gregory I. would have told Pepin, that the weakness of the sovereign's faculties gave the servant no right to usurp the master's authority. Gregory feared God: whereas idolatry had hardened the hearts of these popes, and left them no law but their own insatiable ambition.

⁷ From these questions the reader may judge whether the pope or the emperor was better acquainted with the Scriptures. A pagan philosopher would have defended public idolatry much in the same manner; and the dependence, which both the pagan and the papist place on the image, demonstrates, that they imagine the power of the saint or demon to be intimately connected with the image, which represents, as it were, the body, of which the object of their worship is the soul, so justly do the Scriptures describe idolaters as literally worshipping the works of their own hands, and the man of sin receiving demons (1 Tim. iv.) Sophistry may explain, but it cannot confute. When men cease to hold God in awe, and to be satisfied with Christ as their all, they fall into these or similar errors. The heart, which has not the want of the living God, as its proper nutriment, will feed on the ashes of idolatry.

⁸ This is he who had stopped the progress of the Saracens arms. Mayor of the palace, was the title of a prime minister in France, who during the reigns of a

Stephen, the successor of Zachary, finding the superior strength of the Lombards, now solicited the aid of Constantine, who was too much employed in the east, to send any forces into Italy. In the year 754, the emperor held a council of 338 bishops, to decide the controversy concerning images. They express themselves not improperly on the nature of the heresy.⁴ "Jesus Christ," say they, "hath delivered us from idolatry, and hath taught us to adore him in spirit and in truth. But the devil not being able to endure the beauty of the church, hath insensibly brought back idolatry under the appearance of christianity, persuading men to worship the creature, and to take for God a work, to which they give the name of Jesus Christ."

Reinforced by the decrees of this council against image-worship, Constantine burnt the images, and demolished the walls, which were painted with representations of Christ or the saints; and seemed determined to exterminate all the vestiges of idolatry. In the mean time, in Italy, Stephen, pressed by the victorious arms of Astulphus, applied himself to Pepin, and wrote to all the French dukes, exhorting them to succour St. Peter, and promising them the remission of their sins, a hundred-fold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting. So rapidly advanced the popedom! A letter now was brought to the pope from the emperor, ordering him to go to Astulphus, and demand the restitution of Ravenna. Superstition was every where so strong, that there was no danger incurred by such a step; and the weakness of the emperor, and the distraction of his affairs allowed him not to give any other sort of succour to Italy. Stephen sent to the king of the Lombards, to demand a pass. This was granted, and he set out from Rome, to go to Astulphus. A short time before he undertook this journey, messengers had arrived to him from Pepin, encouraging him to go along with them into France. Stephen arrived at Pavia, the capital of Lombardy, and, after an ineffectual interview with the king, went into France, where Pepin treated him with all possible respect, and promised to undertake an expedition into Italy to relieve the Roman See. Stephen anointed with oil the king of the Franks; and, by the authority of St. Peter, forbade the French lords, on pain of excommunication, to choose a king of another race.

Thus did these two ambitious men support one another in their schemes of rapacity and injustice. In the pope the evil was aggravated by the pretence of religion.⁴ "It is

you," says Stephen, "whom God hath chosen for this purpose by his presence from all eternity. For whom he hath predestinated, them he also called; and, whom he called, them he also justified." It must be owned, that Stephen was fitter to conduct a negotiation, than to expound a text.

Pepin attacked Astulphus so vigorously, that, in the end, he obliged him to deliver the Exarchate, that is Ravenna, and twenty-one cities besides, to the pope. Constantine, alarmed at the danger of his dominions in Italy, sent an embassy to king Pepin, to press him to deliver the Exarchate to its rightful sovereign; but in vain. In the issue, the pope became the proprietor of Ravenna and its dependencies, and added rapacity to his rebellion.

From this time he not only assumed the tone of infallibility and spiritual dominion, but became literally a temporal prince. On the death of Astulphus, Desiderius, duke of Tuscany, in order to obtain the succession, promised Stephen, to deliver to him some other cities, which the Lombards had taken from the emperor. Stephen embraced the offer without hesitation, assisted Desiderius in his views, and obtained for the popedom the dutchy of Ferrara, and two other fortresses. The injured emperor, in the mean time, continued to exterminate idolatry in the east; but, whether his motives were pious or not, our ignorance of his private character will not suffer us to ascertain. The ambitious and successful Stephen held the popedom five years, and died in 757. His successor Paul, even before his appointment to that dignity, had taken care to cultivate the friendship and secure the protection of Pepin. The maritime parts of Italy still obeyed the emperor, and these, together with the Lombards, threatened the pope, from time to time; whence he was induced to write frequently to the king of France for assistance.⁵

Constantine forbade every where the addressing of prayers to the Virgin Mary, or to other Saints, and discountenanced the monks through his dominions. He is said to have treated the worshippers of images with great barbarity, and to have been profane and vicious in his own practice. But such censures were the natural and obvious effect of his conduct.

In the year 768 died Pepin, the great supporter of the popedom. Its grandeur was, however, not yet arrived at maturity. Adrian, who was elected pope in 772, was not

⁴ Fleury XLIII. 7.

⁵ Fleury, a much better divine than Stephen, is struck with the absurdity of the assertion, XLIII. 15. If I am somewhat more secular in this narration than in general, the importance of the subject, which is nothing less

than the establishment of the papal power, and the vindication of faithful witnesses, who from age to age protested against it, may afford a sufficient apology. Popery once established, I shall not so minutely attend her steps, but seek the children of God, wherever they are to be found.

⁷ It is remarkable, that Fleury blames this pope for representing his secular affairs as if they were spiritual, 31.

inferior to his predecessors in the arts of ambitious intrigue. He received the homage of Piacenza and Spoleto, towns of Lombardy, and allowed them to choose a duke among themselves. Partly by these means, and still more by the powerful alliance of Charles, the son and successor of Pepin, commonly called Charlemagne for his great exploits, he strengthened himself against the hostilities of king Desiderius. He received from the French king a confirmation of Pepin's donative of the Exarchate, with some considerable additions of territory. The friendship of ambitious men is cemented by views of interest. This was exactly the case of Charles and Adrian. The former derived from the sacred character of the latter the most substantial addition to his reputation in a superstitious age, and was enabled to expel Desiderius entirely from his dominions. In the year 774, he assumed the title of king of France and Lombardy. The last king of the Lombards was sent into a monastery in France, where he ended his days. In the next year, the emperor Constantine died, after having vigorously opposed image-worship all his reign. At the same time also died the Mahometan Caliph Almanson, the founder of Bagdad, which from that time became the residence of the Saracen monarchs; whose empire then began to carry more the appearance of a regular government, and ceased to be so troublesome to the remains of the old Roman empire, as it had formerly been.

Leo, the son and successor of Constantine, trode in the steps of his father and grandfather, and exercised severities on the supporters of image-worship. But, as he died in the year 780,^a his wife Irene assumed the government in the name of her son Constantine, who was only ten years old. She openly and zealously supported idolatry. The sect was so eagerly addicted to it, that there wanted only the authority of a sovereign to render it triumphant. Images gained the ascendancy; and the monastic life, which either the piety or the prudence of three emperors,—for I cannot ascertain their real character,—had much discouraged, became again victorious in Greece and Asia.^b

In 784 Irene wrote to Adrian, desiring his presence at a council to be held for the support of image-worship; at least that he would send legates to it. Tarasius, bishop of Constantinople, just appointed, and perfectly harmonizing with the views of the empress, wrote to the same purport. Adrian's answer is worthy of a pope. He expresses his joy at the prospect of the establishment

of image-worship; and, at the same time, testifies his displeasure at the presumption of Tarasius, in calling himself universal patriarch: he demands the restoration of St. Peter's patrimony, which, during the schism, the emperors of Constantinople had withheld; and sets before the empress the magnificent pattern of Charlemagne, who had given to the Roman Church, to be enjoyed for ever, provinces, cities and castles, once in possession of the Lombards, but which of right belonged to St. Peter. Ambition and avarice were thus covered with the thin veil of superstition. But this was the age of clerical usurpations. Large domains were now commonly annexed, by superstitious princes, to the Church, for the pardon of their sins; but the pope was the greatest gainer by this traffic. That, which is most to our purpose to observe, is the awful departure, which had commonly been made, throughout Christendom, from the all-important article of justification. While this is firmly believed and revered, it is impossible for men to think of commuting for their offences with heaven; and it is itself the surest defence against clerical encroachments, superstition, idolatry, and hypocrisis. But the pulpits were silent on this doctrine: during this whole century, false religion grew without any check or molestation; and vices, both in public and private life, increased in proportion.

In the year 787 the second council of Nice was held under the empress: and, of such a council it is sufficient to say, that is confirmed idolatrous worship. Pope Adrian, having received the acts of the council, sent them to Charlemagne, that he might procure the approbation of the bishops of the west. But here his expectations were disappointed. United in politics by the coincidence of interested views, they were however found to disagree in religious sentiments. Charlemagne, though illiterate himself, was one of the greatest patrons of learning: and, if he may be supposed to have been in earnest in any opinions, he would naturally be much influenced by the famous Alcuin, an Englishman, whom he cherished and esteemed. The customs and habits of the west were far from universally favouring the reigning idolatry. I am anxiously looking for the features of the Church of Christ in this very gloomy period, and seem to think that her existence was most probably to be found in the Churches lately planted, or, in those, which were then in an infant state. Our own island was decidedly, at that time, against idolatry. The British Churches executed the second council of Nice;^c and some even of the Italian bishops pro-

^a Fleury, XLIV. 16.

^b of the plan, on which I have chosen to write a Church History, need the authority of any writer to support it, the words of Fleury are very decisive, B. XLIV. 17. "The temporal affairs of the Church, say, of the Roman Church, do not belong to an ecclesiastical history."

^c Hoveden Annal. pars prior. p. 232. Usher Annal. p. 19, 20. The former of these writers tells us, that Alcuin composed the Carolin books.

tested against the growing evil. Nor is it probable, that the churches of Germany, now forming, were at all disposed to receive it. Men, who first receive Christianity from zealous teachers, are simple and sincere; nor is it easy to convince an ingenuous person, that idolatry, however qualified or explained, is allowable on the plan of the Scriptures, either of the Old or New Testament. France itself had, as yet, shewn no disposition positively in favour of idolatry. The Roman See alone, in Europe, had in form supported and defended it. And experience proves, that the greatest stages of degeneracy are to be found in the Churches, which have subsisted the longest.

Charlemagne could not but be struck at the discordancy of the Niceæ council with the habits of the west; and was therefore so far from receiving, with implicit faith, the recommendation of it by pope Adrian, that he ordered the bishops of the west to examine the merits of the question. The issue was, the publication of the Carolin books, in which the famous Alcuin had at least a distinguished share. In these the authors find fault with a former synod held in Greece, under Constantine, which forbade the use of images. For they held the dangerous opinion of Gregory I., namely, that these might be set up in churches, and serve as books for the instruction of the people. But they condemn, in very free terms, the late Grecian synod, which enjoined the worship of images. They find fault with the flattering addresses made by the Greek bishops to pope Adrian. They allow the primacy of St. Peter's See, but are far from founding their faith on the pope's decrees. They condemn the worship of images by scriptural arguments, by no means impertinent or contemptible, but which there is no occasion for me to repeat.¹

Engilbert, the ambassador of Charles, presented these books to Adrian. This ambitious politician, who subsisted by the protection of Charlemagne, and who was concerned to maintain the honour of his See, replied with great prudence. It is evident, from his whole conduct, that his object was the temporal interests of the popedom. Hence his answer to Charles was tame and insipid, and his defence of image-worship weak and inconclusive.² Charles and the French churches persevered in their own middle practice: they used images, but they abhorred the adoration of them. In the year 794, at Frankfort upon the Maine, a synod was held, consisting of 800 bishops, who condemned the second council of Nice, and the worship of images. In this synod, Paulinus, bishop of Aquileia, in Italy, bore some share. Adrian, however, continued on good

terms with Charlemagne, to the death of the former, which took place before the close of the century, when he was succeeded by Leo III. Political intrigue, and secular artifices, not theological study, was then the practice of Roman bishops. The Irish, at this time, particularly excelled in divinity, travelled through various countries, and became renowned for knowledge; and the superior light of England and France, in the controversy concerning images, seems to shew both those countries, in knowledge and in regard for the doctrines of Scripture, to have been far superior to Rome. Yet so strongly were men prejudiced in favour of the dignity of the Roman See, that it still remained in the height of its power, and was enabled in process of time to communicate its Molotrous abominations through Europe. In the east the worship of images was triumphant; but as yet not universal.³

This chapter contains the narrative of the most fatal events, which the Church had ever seen. The Arian heresy had disfigured and deeply wounded her constitution, but she had recovered, and confounded this adversary. The Pelagian poison had operated for a time; but its detection and expulsion had even contributed to recover her health, and to restore her to a great degree of apostolical purity. Other heresies, which affected the doctrine of the Trinity, had been successfully opposed: superstition, for a number of centuries, had sullied her beauty, but had left her vitals untouched. Idolatry, at length, aided by the same superstitious propensity, prevailed to disunite her from Christ, her living head. The reigning powers, both in the east and the west, were overgrown with false worship: even those parts of the west, which as yet were not disposed to receive idolatry, were deeply prepared for the gradual admission of it, partly by the growing of superstition, and partly by the submission of all the European churches to the domination of the Roman See. There the seat of Antichrist was firmly fixed. Rebellion against the lawful power of the magistracy, the most arrogant claims to infallibility, and the support of image-worship, conspired with the temporal dominion lately obtained by the bishop of Rome, to render him the tyrant of the church. His dominions, indeed, were not large; but, in conjunction with the proud pretensions of his ecclesiastical character, they gave him a superlative dignity in the eyes of all Europe. It was evident, that the face of the whole church was altered: from the year 797, to about the year 2000, we have the dominion of

¹ Irene, toward the close of this century, deposed her son Constantine, and put out his eyes with such violence, that he lost his life. This monster, a worthy patron of idolatry, then reigned alone, and co-operated with the pope of Rome, in the support of Satan's kingdom.

² See Du Pin, Councils of 8th century.

³ This is allowed by Du Pin. Ibid.

the beast;" and the prophesying of the witnesses in sackcloth, which was to continue 1260 days, or forty and two months, that is, for 1260 years. We must now look for the real Church, either, in distinct individual saints, who, in the midst of popery, were preserved by effectual grace in vital union with the Son of God, or, in associations of true Christians, formed in different regions, which were in a state of persecution and much affliction. Where then was the Church in the eighth century? She still subsisted; and the opposition made to idolatry by Charles and the council of Frankfort, demonstrates her existence. Nothing but the influence of principles very opposite to those which were fashionable at Rome can account for such events, at a time when the dignity of the Roman See was held in universal veneration. After all, it is in the propagation of the Gospel among the pagans, that the real Church is chiefly to be seen in this century. Some real work of this kind was carrying on, while the popedom was forming; and, by the adorable Providence of God, pious missionaries, who entered not into the recent controversies, but were engaged in actions purely spiritual, were patronized and supported in preaching Christ among foreign nations, by the same popes of Rome, who were opposing his grace in their own.* Their ambition led them to cherish the zeal of the missionaries, but with how different a spirit! To this scene let us now direct our attention.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY, INCLUDING THE LIFE OF BONIFACE, ARCHBISHOP OF MENTZ.

WILLIBROD,^o with other English missionaries, continued to labour with success in the conversion of the Frisians. His episcopal seat was, as we have seen,^o at Utrecht; for fifty years he preached, founded churches and monasteries, and appointed new bishops. The consequence of his labours was, that great numbers of pagans were received into the pale of the Church.

The great light of Germany in this century was an Englishman named Winfrid,

born at Kinton in Devonshire, about the year 680. He was brought up in the monastic life from infancy. His residence was in the monastery of Nutecl, in the diocese of Winchester, which was afterwards destroyed by the Danes, and was never rebuilt. Here he was made acquainted with the sacred and secular learning of the times. At the age of 30, he was ordained priest, on the recommendation of his abbot, and laboured with much zeal in preaching the word of God. His spirit was ardent, and he longed to be employed as a missionary in the conversion of pagans. The example of a number of pious persons of his own country might, no doubt, have great influence with him; for we have seen already, that the zeal of spreading the Gospel was peculiarly strong in the British isles. He went over with two monks into Friesland about the year 716. He proceeded to Utrecht, "to WATER, where Willibrod had *KLANTOX*;" but finding that circumstances rendered it impracticable at present to preach the Gospel there, he returned into England, with his companions, to his monastery.

On the death of the abbot of Nutecl, the society would have elected Winfrid in his room; but the monk, steady to his purpose, refused to accept the Presidency; and, with recommendatory letters from the bishop of Winchester, went to Rome, and presented himself to the pope, expressing a desire of being employed in the conversion of infidels. Gregory II. encouraged his zeal, and gave him a commission of the most ample and unlimited nature in the year 719.

With this commission Winfrid went into Bavaria and Thuringia. In the first country he reformed the Churches, in the second he was successful in the conversion of infidels. Here also he observed, how true religion, where it had been planted, was almost destroyed by false teachers: some pastors, indeed, were zealous for the service of God, but others were given up to scandalous vices: the English missionary beheld their state, and the ill effects of it on the people, with sorrow; and laboured, with all his might, to recover them to true repentance.

It was with sincere delight, that he afterwards learned, that the door, which had been shut against his first attempts in Friesland, was now opened for preaching the Gospel in that country. Rathed, king of the Frisians, who had planted idolatry afresh among his subjects, was dead, and the obstacles were removed. Winfrid returned into Friesland, and for three years co-operated with Willibrod. The pale of the Church was hence enlarged: churches were erected: many received the word of God; and idolatry was more and more subdued.

Willibrod, declining in strength through old age, chose Winfrid for his successor. I have before observed, that the duration of his

^o Rev. xl. and xlii.

^o Should any persons startle, that I call image-worship by no better name than idolatry, and rank pagan and papal reactions in the same class, I would refer such to the discourse of St. Paul on the Galatians, iv. 8, 9. Idolatry being with them merely mental, originated in a self-righteous principle, and the Apostle looks on them as worshippers of false gods, and informs them that they were returning again to bondage. How much more justly may image-worship be called "the doing service to them which by nature are no gods," where the idola-try is both mental and external!

^o Fleury, 8th Vol. XLI. 1.

^o See page 423 of this volume.

^o Fleury XLI. 85, &c. Albin Butler, Vol. 6.

pastoral labours, in his mission, was no less than fifty years. The example of this great and holy person had long before this stirred up others to labour in the best of causes. Soon after that, he, with eleven companions in 690, had begun to preach the Gospel in Friesland, two brothers of the English nation went over into the country of the ancient Saxons, in order to preach to the idolaters. They were both called Ewald. They arrived in this country about the year 694, and meeting with a certain steward, desired him to conduct them to his lord. They were employed all the way in prayer, in singing psalms and hymns. The barbarians fearing lest these men might draw their lord over to Christianity, murdered both the brothers; and thus, toward the close of the foregoing century, it pleased God to take to himself two persons who had devoted themselves to preach the Gospel of his Son among the heathen. The time of the more peculiar visitation of Germany was reserved for the age which we are now reviewing.

It must have been extremely delightful to Willibrod, to have met with a coadjutor so zealous and sincere as Winfrid. However, the latter declined the offer, because the pope had enjoined him to preach in the eastern parts of Germany; and he felt himself bound to perform his promise. It is not possible, indeed, to conceive such a man as Gregory to have had any other views than those of secular ambition in exacting this promise from Winfrid. But it seems also equally apparent, that the motives of the latter were holy and spiritual. Willibrod acquiesced in Winfrid's desires, and dismissed him with his blessing. The younger missionary departed immediately, and came into Hesse, to a place called Omenbourg, belonging to two brothers, who were nominal Christians, but practical idolaters. Winfrid's labours were successful, both on them and their subjects: and, throughout Hesse, or at least a very great part of it, even to the confines of Saxony, he erected the standard of truth, and upheld it with much zeal, to the confusion of the kingdom of Satan. It ought not, however, to be concealed, that Winfrid suffered great hardships in a country so poor and uncultivated as the greater part of Germany then was; that he supported himself at times by the labour of his hands, and was exposed to imminent peril from the rage of the obetinate pagans.

After some time he returned to Rome, was kindly received by Gregory II. and was consecrated bishop of the new German Churches, by the name of Boniface. There seems, even in that little circumstance, something of the policy of the Roman See. A Roman name was more likely to procure from the German converts respect to the Pope, than an English one. Gregory, moreover, solicitous to preserve his dignity, ex-

acted from the new bishop an oath of subjection to the papal authority, conceived in the strongest terms; a circumstance, remarkably proving both the ambition of Gregory and the superstition of the times. Boniface armed with letters from the pope, and what was far better, encouraged by the addition of fresh labourers from England, returned to the scenes of his mission. Coming into Hesse, he confirmed, by imposition of hands, several who had already been baptized, and exerted himself with much zeal against the idolatrous superstitions of the Germans. An oak of prodigious size had been an instrument of much pagan delusion: his sincerest converts advised him to cut it down; and he followed their counsel. It ought to be observed, that the famous Charles Martel protected him with his civil authority; for the dominion of the French extended a considerable way into Germany. It does not appear, however, that Boniface made any other use of this circumstance, than what the most conscientious ecclesiastic may do, wherever the Christian religion is established by the laws.

Daniel, bishop of Winchester, about the year 729, wrote to Boniface concerning the best method of dealing with idolaters. "Do not contradict," says he, "in a direct manner their accounts of the genealogy of their gods; allow that they were born from one another in the same way as mankind are; this concession will give you the advantage of proving, that there was a time when they had no existence.—Ask them, who governed the world before the birth of their gods—ask them, if these gods have ceased to propagate. If they have not, shew them the consequence; namely, that the gods must be infinite in number, and that no man can rationally be at ease in worshipping any of them, lest he should, by that means, offend one, who is more powerful.—Argue thus with them, not in the way of insult, but with temper and moderation; and take opportunities to contrast these absurdities with the Christian doctrine: let the pagans be rather ashamed than incensed by your oblique mode of stating these subjects.—Shew them the insufficiency of their plea of antiquity: inform them that idolatry did anciently prevail over the world, but that Jesus Christ was manifested, in order to reconcile men to God by his grace."—Piety and good sense appear to have predominated in these instructions, and we have here, in addition to those already given, of the grace of God conferred on our ancestors during the heptarchy.

Boniface preserved a correspondence with other friends in England, as well as with Daniel. From his native country he was supplied also, as we have seen, with fellow-

labourers. In Thuringia he confirmed the churches, delivered them from heresies and 'false brethren, and the work still prospered in his hand.

In the mean time, like all upright and conscientious men, he found himself often involved in difficulties, and doubted in what manner he should regulate his conduct in regard to scandalous priests, who greatly obstructed his mission. He laid his doubts before his old friend the bishop of Winchester.* Should he avoid altogether their communication, he might offend the court of France, without whose civil protection he could not proceed in his mission. Should he preserve connection with them, he was afraid of bringing guilt upon his conscience. Daniel advises him to endure with patience, what he could not amend: he counsels him not to make a schism in the Church, under pretence of purging it; and, at the same time, exhorts him to exercise church-discipline on notorious offenders.

Boniface desired Daniel also to send him the book of the prophets, "which," says he, "the abbot Winbert, formerly my master, left at his death, written in very distinct characters. A greater consolation in my old age I cannot receive; for I can find no book like it in this country; and, as my sight grows weak, I cannot easily distinguish the small letters, which are joined close together, in the sacred volumes, which are at present in my possession." Do these things seem to belong to the character of an ambitious and insidious ecclesiastic, or to that of a simple and upright servant of Jesus Christ?

The reputation of this Saint,—such I shall venture to call him from the evidence of facts,—was spread through the greatest part of Europe; and many from England poured into Germany, to connect themselves with him. These dispersed themselves in the country, and preached in the villages of Hesse and Thuringia.

In 782, Boniface received the title of archbishop, from Gregory III. who supported his mission with the same spirit with which Gregory II. had done. Encouraged by a letter sent to him from Rome, he proceeded to erect new churches, and to extend the profession of the gospel. At this time, he found the Bavarian churches disturbed by an heretic, called *Brennolf*, who would have seduced the people into idolatry. Boniface condemned him, according to the canons, freed the country from his devices, and restored the discipline of the Church.

About the year 782, Burchard and Lullus were invited from England by Boniface, who made the former bishop of Würzburg, where *Kilian* had preached, and suffered martyrdom, about fifty years before. He was abundantly

successful during the labours of ten years, by which his strength was exhausted: he gave up his bishopric in 752, and died soon after. Butler, Vol. X.

Some time after, Boniface wrote to Northelme, archbishop of Canterbury, in a strain, which equally shews the charity and sincerity of his spirit, and the superstition of the times.† In 788, he again visited Rome, being far advanced in life; and, after some stay, he induced several Englishmen, who resided there, to join with him in his German mission. Returning into Bavaria, by the desire of duke Odilo, he restored the purity of the faith, and prevailed against the artifices of some seducers, who had done much mischief both by false doctrine and flagitious example. He established three new bishoprics in the country, at Salzburg, Frisingen, and Ratisbon. That of Passaw had been fixed before. It must, however, be observed, that the successes and conquests of the Carolingian princes much facilitated his labours in Germany.

In writing to Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury,‡ after testifying his zealous adherence to the See of Rome, and his submission to its authority, he exhorts him to discharge his duty faithfully, notwithstanding the difficulties to which good pastors were exposed. "Let us fight," says he, "for the Lord; for we live in days of affliction and anguish. Let us die, if God so please, for the laws of our fathers, that with them we may obtain the heavenly inheritance. Let us not be as dumb dogs, sleepy watchmen, or selfish hirelings, but as careful and vigilant pastors, preaching to all ranks, as far as God shall enable us, in season and out of season, as Gregory writes in his pastoral."

Adalbert,§ a Frenchman, a proud enthusiast, and Clement, a Scotchman, pretended that Christ, by his descent into hell, delivered the souls of the damned. The former was deceived by the most absurd and extravagant delusions, and the latter was infamous in life and conversation. Gevilieb also, a German bishop, who associated with them, had actually committed murder; but so ignorant and depraved were the rulers of the German Christians, that he was still allowed to continue a bishop without infamy. Boniface, who saw the evil of these things more deeply than others, desired that the two former might be imprisoned by the authority of duke Carloman, and be secluded from society, that they might not corrupt others by their poisonous sentiments, and that Gevilieb might be deposed from his bishopric. He gained his point in the condemnation and imprisonment of the two former, and in the deposition of the latter. He, who has no charity for souls, and no prospects beyond those of this life,

* Bonif. Eph. 3. Fleury, B. XLI. toward the end.

† Ep. B. V. See Fleury XLII. 27.

‡ Bonif. Ep. 185. Fleury XLII. 37.

§ Butler's Lives, Boniface. Fleury XLII. 52.

may hardly concede the missionary; but every serious and candid mind will applaud the sincerity and uprightness of his intentions, and will wish for the exercise of discipline, though in a manner somewhat irregular, provided substantial justice be done, rather than that men should be allowed to corrupt their fellow-creatures, without mercy and without control. The guilt of these three men seems to have been evidenced by a detail of circumstances, which are too uninteresting to be related at large.

Boniface, at length, was fixed at Mentz, and he is continually called archbishop of that city. The increase of his dignity does not, however, seem to have diminished his zeal and laboriousness. His connection with England was constantly preserved; and, it is in the epistolary correspondence with his own country, that the most striking evidence of his pious views appears. In one of his epistles,* he mentions his sufferings from pagans, false Christians, and immoral pastors: he feels as a man these hardships, but intimates his desire of the honour of dying for the love of him, who died for us. He often begged for books from England, especially those of Bede, whom he styles the lamp of the Church. He wrote also a circular letter to the bishops and people of England, intreating their prayers for the success of his missions.

Many persons, while in obscure life, have professed much zeal for the service of God, but have declined in earnestness, as they advanced in years, particularly if they acquired honour and dignity in the world. This was not the case with Boniface. Though oppressed with age and infirmities, and greatly revered in the whole Christian world, he determined to return into Friesland. Before his departure, he acted in all things, as if he had a strong presentiment of what was to happen. He appointed Lullus, an Englishman, his successor, as archbishop of Mentz, and wrote to the abbot of St. Denys, desiring him to acquaint the king, Pepin, that he and his friends believed he had not long to live. He begged, that the king would shew kindness to the missionaries whom he should leave behind him. "Some" of them," said he, "are priests dispersed into divers parts, for the good of the Church: others are monks, settled in small monasteries, where they instruct the children. There are aged men with me, who have long assisted me in my labours. I fear, lest after my death, they be dispersed, and the disciples, who are near the pagan frontiers, should lose the faith of Jesus Christ. I beg that my son Lullus, may be confirmed in the episcopal office, and that he may teach the priests, the monks, and the people. I hope that he will perform these duties. That, which most afflicts me, is,

that the priests, who sit on the pagan frontiers, are very indigent. They can obtain bread, but not fishes, unless they be assisted, as they have been by me. Let me know your answer, that I may live of the with more cheerfulness.

It is most probable, that he received an answer agreeable to his benevolent spirit, as, before his departure, he ordained Lullus his successor, with the consent of king Pepin.[†] He went by the Rhine into Friesland, where, assisted by Eoban, whom he had ordained bishop of Utrecht, after the death of Willibrod, he brought great numbers of pagans into the pale of the Church. He had appointed a day to confirm those, whom he had baptised. In waiting for them, he was assailed with his followers on the banks of the Ems, a river which then divided East and West Friesland. His intention was to confirm, by imposition of hands, the converts in the plains of Doekum. On the appointed day, he beheld, in the morning, not the new converts, whom he expected, but a troop of angry pagans, armed with shields and lances. The servants went out to resist, but Boniface, with calm intrepidity, said to his followers, "Children, forbear to fight; the Scripture forbids us to render evil for evil. The day, which I have long waited for, is come; hope in God, and he will save your souls." Thus did he prepare the priests and the rest of his companions for martyrdom. The pagans attacked them furiously, and slew the whole company, fifty-two in number, besides Boniface himself. This happened in the year 755, in the fortieth year after his arrival in Germany, and in the 75th of his age. The manner, in which his death was received by the Christian Germans, shews the high veneration, in which he was held through the country, and sufficiently confutes the notion, which some have held of his imperious and fraudulent conduct. They collected a great army, attacked the pagans, slew many of them, pillaged their country, and carried off their wives and children. Those, who remained pagans in Friesland, were glad to obtain peace by submitting to Christian rites. Such a method of shewing regard for Boniface, might be expected from a rude and ill-informed multitude. But, rude as they were, they had the gift of common sense, and could judge whether the Apostles of the Germans was their sincere friend or not; and their judgment is with me decisive.

A collection of Boniface's letters has been preserved, some of which have already been mentioned. That the reformation of the clergy, and the conversion of infidels, were the objects of his zeal, appears from his literary correspondence, no less than from the whole tenour of his life.[‡] In the first

* 16 Ep. Albin Butler.
† Ep. 57.

‡ Fleury XLII. 24.
Du Pin. 281 Cont. Bonif.

letter to Nithardus, in which he takes the name of Winfrid, he exhorts him to contemn the things of time and sense, and to devote himself to the study of the Scriptures, which he recommends as the highest wisdom. "Nothing," says he, "can you search after more honourably in youth, or enjoy more comfortably in old age, than the knowledge of holy Scripture."

In another letter, he exhorts the priest Harofred, in his own name, and in that of eight bishops, who were with him, to shew the memoir, which they sent him, to the king of the Merians. The purport of it was to implore that prince to check the debaucheries and disorders of his kingdom.

Extremely attached as he was, both to the Roman See and to monastic institutions, he knew how to subdue these attachments, and make them obedient to a stronger passion for genuine piety and virtue. He wrote to Cathbert, archbishop of Canterbury, desiring him to restrain the women of England from going in such numbers to Rome: "the greatest part of them," says he, "live in lewdness, and scandalize the Church; as there is scarce a city in Lombardy and France, where there are not some English women of flagitious life and manners."

That association of ideas, which Mr. Locke describes, and which has been in all ages a powerful source of error and absurdity, both in principles and practice, accounts for the acrimonious expressions with which Protestant writers have too often indulged themselves in the relation of matters connected with the See of Rome.—The Magdubergian Centurion seems, by their treatment of the character of Boniface, to have largely imbibed this prejudice. I was surprised to find them giving sanction to the account of an old Chronicle,* which describes Boniface as raising soldiers to invade the Thuringians, absolving them from the payment of taxes to their civil governors, and justifying this extraordinary conduct by the special of a divine vision. The manners of the eighth century certainly did not allow such an union of the military and sacerdotal character: moreover, the circumstances of Boniface's proceedings, as attested by the most credible accounts, and, above all, the unquestionable memorials of his evangelical labours, forbid me to entertain such sentiments of the Apostle of Germany. If he had had soldiers at his devotion, he surely might have avoided those hardships which he endured, and have prevented the murder of himself, and of his companions, in the plains of Dokum. The account seems to have been forged, in order to justify the conduct of military prelates, and of papal tyranny in after-ages. The censures also, which Boniface passed upon

Adalbert and Clement, seem to have been arraigned by the Centurion, without foundation. It looks like an instance of great partiality to call such men "good persons," who were convicted of scandalous wickedness. But it would be tedious to particularize the charges, which these writers have formed against Boniface, supported chiefly by mere suspicions and objections.

That Mosheim should inveigh against this missionary, is what might be expected from his prejudices. But he should have written with consistency. He speaks of the pious labours of Boniface, of his finishing with glory the task he had undertaken, and of the assistance which he received from a number of pious men, who repaired to him from England and France.^b "His piety," he adds, "was ill rewarded by that barbarous people, by whom he was murdered. If we consider the eminent services he rendered to Christianity, the honourable title of the Apostle of the Germans will appear to have been not undeservedly bestowed." Who could imagine that this pious pastor should, by the same writer, be accused, without warrant, of often "employing violence and terror, and sometimes artifices and fraud, in order to multiply the number of Christians." He ascribes to him also "an imperious and arrogant temper, and a cunning and insidious turn of mind."

Which of these two accounts shall we believe? for, it is as impossible, that both should be true, as that piety should be consistent with a spirit of violence, arrogance, and fraud. But, it is true, that men zealous to propagate divine truth in the earth, are often described by those, who arrogate to themselves the whole praise of judgment and candour. There has seldom existed an eminent and useful missionary, who has not, in this way, been aspersed. In the mean time, I am sensible, that the foundation of the strong prejudices against Boniface, is his attachment to the Roman See. I cannot observe, however, that he either practised idolatry, or taught false doctrine. Removed from the scene of controversy, he seems to have taken no part in the debate concerning Images: he was ever invariable in opposing idolatry and immorality: he lived amidst many dangers and sufferings; and he appears to have supported, for many years, an uniform tenour of zeal, to which he sacrificed all worldly conveniences, and, in fine, to have finished his course in martyrdom, and in the patience and meekness of a disciple of Christ. I shall leave it to the reader's judgment, what estimate ought to be formed of the man, after having observed, that God made large use of his labours by extending, in the north of Europe, the bounds of the Church, at the

* Cent. 8th. De propagatione Evangelii, De Bonifacio.

^b Mosheim, Cent. VIII.

same time that they were so much contracted in Asia and Africa.

Virgilius, an Irishman, was appointed bishop of Salzburg, by king Pepin. His modesty prevented him from entering upon the office for two years; but he was at length prevailed upon to receive consecration. He followed the steps of Boniface in rooting out the remains of idolatry in his diocese, and died in the year 780.*

Winebald, the son of a royal English Saxon, shared with Boniface in his labours in Germany; his life was preserved, though in imminent danger from idolaters, and God blessed his work among the heathen: he died in 760.

In Friesland, the Church of Utrecht was governed by Gregory, who, from the fifteenth year of his age, had been a follower of Boniface. Two of his brothers having been murdered in a wood, the barons, whose vassals they were, delivered the murderers bound into his hands. Gregory, after he had treated them kindly, bad them depart in peace, saying, sin no more, lest a worse thing befall you. He was assisted in his ministerial labours by several disciples of various nations; some were of his own nation, the French, others were English, Frisons, newly converted Saxons, and Bavarians. Scarce a day passed, but early in the morning he gave them spiritual instruction. This man affected no singularity either in habit or in diet. That he was not carried away by the torrent of popular superstition, is a strong proof either of great understanding, or of eminent piety, or of both. But he recommended sobriety among his disciples; was not to be moved from the path of duty by slander, and was boundless in his liberality to the poor. He died about the year 776.

Liefvyn, an Englishman, one of his disciples, was distinguished by his labours among the missionaries of Germany. He ventured even to appear before the assembly

* A misunderstanding had once taken place between this missionary and Boniface. The latter accused him to the See of Rome, of teaching, "that there was another world, and other men under the earth, or another sun and moon." Bonif. Ep. 10: To the pious spirit of Boniface a difficulty of solving the question arose, on this view of the tenets of Virgilius, how such ideas were compatible with the Mosaic account of the origin of all mankind from Adam, and of the redemption of the whole species by Jesus Christ. After all, it appears that Boniface was mistaken, and that Virgilius, being better acquainted with the true figure of the earth, than most of his contemporaries in that ignorant age, only held the opinion of the antipodes, a notion as sound in philosophy, as it is innocent in regard to Christianity. As Virgilius was afterwards made bishop of Salzburg, he continued to labour in the same cause with Boniface, and to tread in his steps. It is more than probable, that both Boniface and the pope were satisfied of his soundness in the faith, and dismissed the accusation. It seemed worth while to state this matter in a true light, from the evidence of Boniface's letter. It appears, that Virgilius was not condemned for holding the doctrine of the Antipodes, and that the charge of Bower, against Boniface, is as malicious, as it is ill founded. See hist. of the popes. Zachary.—where the historian, without warrant, accuses Boniface of bearing a secret grudge to Virgilius, and of being actuated by a spirit of revenge.

of the Saxons held upon the Weeser; and, while they were sacrificing to their idols, he exhorted them with a loud voice to turn from those vanities to the living God. As an ambassador from Jehovah, he offered them promises of salvation. And here his zeal seemed likely to have cost him his life; but he was at length suffered to depart, on the remonstrances of Buto, one of their chiefs, who expostulated with them on the unreasonableness of treating an ambassador of the great God with less respect than they did one from any of the neighbouring nations. In the mean time, the arms of Charlemagne prevailed over the Saxons, and eventually, at least, facilitated the labours of Liefvyn, who continued to preach among this people till his death.

Villehad, an English priest, born in Northumberland, was abundantly successful in the conversion of the Saxons. It is true, that he taught under the protection and auspices of Charlemagne. But, whatever may be thought of the motives of the latter, the views of the missionary might be, and probably were, upright and spiritual. Certainly he underwent great hazards, overcame the ferocious spirits of the infidels by his meekness, and spread among them the knowledge of the Gospel. A persecution drove him once out of the country; but, by the power of the emperor, he again returned and prosecuted his labours. After various contests, the Saxons were obliged to submit to Charlemagne, and to become nominal Christians in general. But, that this was universally the case, or even nearly so, the pious laboriousness of a number of missionaries renders very improbable.

Villehad was bishop of Bremen, and was called the Apostle of Saxony. He had begun his mission in Dookum, where Boniface was murdered. He was the first missionary who passed the Elbe. His attention to the Scriptures appears from his copying the epistles of St. Paul. He died in Friesland, after he had laboured 35 years, and had been

4 Fleury XLIV. 11.

Duto seems, in part at least, to have felt the power of the divine word commending itself to his conscience in the sight of God; and to have reported that God was of a truth with real Christian pastors. 1 Cor. xiv. 25. Effects of the kind, mentioned by the Apostle, have, in all ages, been very common, wherever the real Gospel is plainly and faithfully delivered. The message from God convinces and overawes the serious heart, and, by its internal excellence, makes itself a way into the sciences. If Liefvyn had preached more words, I should no more have expected such consequences, as he attended his harangues, than they did the lectures of the Greek philosophers.

Once when he was in danger of being put to death by the pagan Frisians, some of them, struck with his innocence and probity, and doubting whether their religion which he preached might not be divine, said, "let us cast lots whether we shall put him to death, or dismiss him." It was done so, and the lot decided in his favour. Fleury XLV. 15. The custom of deciding cases of this nature by lot, was remarkably German. The classical reader may recollect a similar instance in Caesar's Comment. toward the end of Lib. 1. De Bell. Gall.

bishop of Breton, upwards of two years. To his weeping friends, he said in his dying moments, "Withhold me not from going to God: these sheep I recommend to him, who entrusted them to me, and whose mercy is able to protect them." See Alban Butler. Vol. XI.

This was an age of missionaries: their character and their success form, indeed, almost the only shining picture in this century. Firmin, a Frenchman, preached the Gospel, under various difficulties, in Alsace, Bavaria, and Switzerland, and inspected a number of monasteries. After all, the arms of Charlemagne contributed more than any thing else to the external reception of Christianity; and Alcuin, his favourite, laments, that more pains were taken to exact from the Saxons the payment of tithes, than to inform them of the nature of true religion. Teachers, who were merely secular, drenched in the vices of human nature and of the times, would doubtless act in this manner. But, I have attempted, from very confused and imperfect memoirs, to present to the reader; those, who were indeed sent of God, and laboured, in demonstration of the spirit, in the north of Europe.

Rumold, a native either of England or of Ireland, should be added to the list. He travelled into Lower Germany, went into Brabant, diffused much light in the neighbourhood of Mechlin, and was made an itinerant episcopal missionary. In 775, he was murdered by two persons, one of whom he had reproved for adultery.^a

Silvin, of Auchy, born in Toulouse,^b was first a courtier, then a religious person, and afterwards appointed bishop among the infidels. His labours were, chiefly, in Terouanne, the north of France, which was, in this century, full of pagans and merely nominal Christians. He gathered in a large harvest, having preached for many years. He died at Auchy, in the county of Artois.

CHAPTER. V.

AUTHORS OF THIS CENTURY.

THE most learned writer of this century, if we may except our countryman Bede, seems to have been John of Damascus. He was one of the first, who mingled the Aristotelian or Peripatetic philosophy with the Christian religion.¹ This philosophy was gradually supplanting the authority of the Platonic. It makes no part of my subject, to explain the difference of the systems of Plato and

Aristotle. Suffice it to say, that they were, both very foreign to Christianity, and each, in their turn, corrupted it extremely. John was a voluminous writer, and became, among the Greeks, what Thomas Aquinas afterwards was among the Latins. He seems to have defended the system, commonly called the Arminian notion of free-will, in opposition to the doctrine of effectual grace. This was a natural consequence of philosophising spirit. For, all the philosophers of antiquity, amidst their endless discordances, agreed in teaching man to rely on himself. This is the dangerous philosophy, which St. Paul warns us to beware of. It hitherto wore, chiefly, the garb of Plato: it was now assuming that of Aristotle. In both these dresses, it was still "the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God;" and even at this day, among all who lean to their own understanding, to the disparagement of revelation, its nature is the same, however varnished with the polish of Christian phraseology.

In the doctrine of the Trinity, John appears to have been orthodox: in other respects, he was one of the most powerful supporters of error. He was an advocate for the practice of praying for the dead, which he regarded as effectual for the remission of sins. This was a deplorable article of superstition, which had been growing in the Church, and wanted the sanction of a genius like that of John, to give it lasting celebrity. I can find no evidences of his real knowledge or practice of godliness. And the reader will think he has been detained sufficiently by this Grecian author, after he has learned, that the eloquent and learned pen of John of Damascus, defended the detestable doctrine of image-worship, and contributed more than that of any other author, to establish the practice of it in the east. In the mean time there arose no evangelical luminary, who might combat his arguments with sufficient ability. The Scripture itself, indeed, was more than half buried under the load of superstitions. The learning of this eastern father, was probably more accurate and refined than that of Bede. In the latter, however, we have seen the fullest evidence of Christian light and humility: in the former, as far as respects true wisdom, all is dark and dreary; and the baleful influence of his unscriptural opinions, however respectable he might be in a literary view, has seldom been exceeded by that of any other writer in the history of the Church.

I have already taken notice of the opposition made in the west, to the progress of image-worship, by the authority of Charlemagne. The Carolin books, published in his name, were powerful checks against the

^a Mon. Cent. VIII.

^b A. Butler, Vol. VII.

¹ See Alban Butler's Lives of Saints. Fleur. XLII. 44.

growing evil; and it is more probable, that such a prince as Charlemagne was carried along by the current of the times, than that he directed the sentiments of the western Churches by his own theological studies. Political and secular reasons unhappily retained these Churches in the Roman communion, and, in process of time, the abominations of idolatry overspread them all. It is, however, a pleasing circumstance, that the labours of missionaries in the north of Europe, which form the most shining part of Christian history in this century, were all conducted by Christians of the west, and particularly by those, who were the most remote from idolatry, those of our own country especially. There is, therefore, good reason to believe, that the new Churches in the north were taught to worship the living God, through the one Mediator Christ. For the British Churches expressed the most marked detestation of the second council of Nice.^a And Alcuin, the preceptor of Charlemagne, disproved its decrees in a letter, by express authorities of Scripture. It is too true, that our ancestors, like the rest of Europe, learned at length to worship idols. For religious movements among churches are generally retrograde. Entirely distinct from human institutions of science, Christian views are most perfect at first, as being derived from the divine word, and impressed on the hearts of men by divine grace: the wisdom of this world, aided by the natural propensities of mankind, corrupts them afterwards by degrees, and too often leaves them, at length, neither root nor branch of evangelical light and purity.

Alcuin, who has been just mentioned, was born in England;¹ and was a deacon of the Church of York. He was sent ambassador into France by Offa, king of the Mercians, in the year 790. On this occasion, he gained the esteem of Charlemagne, and persuaded that monarch to found the universities of Paris and Pavia. He was looked upon as one of the wisest and most learned men of his time. He read public lectures in the emperor's palace, and in other places. He wrote, in an orthodox manner, on the Trinity, and, in particular, confuted the notions of Felix, bishop of Urgel, of whom it is sufficient to say, that he revived something like the Nestorian heresy, by separating the humanity from the divinity of the Son of God. Alcuin shewed himself a master of his subject, and wrote in a candid and moderate spirit. He died in 804.

Even Italy itself was not disposed altogether to obey the pope, in regard to image-worship. Some Italian bishops assisted at the council of Frankfort, before mentioned;

and Paulinus, of Aquilain, bore a distinguished part in it. This prelate wrote, also, against the error of Felix, and seems to have been one of the best bishops of his time. Let us try, from the scanty materials before us, if we can collect his views and spirit on subjects peculiarly Christian.

This bishop successfully opposed the error of Felix, concerning the person of Jesus Christ, and wrote a book of wholesome instructions, which for a long time was supposed to be the work of Augustine.² It is remarkable, that he and some other Italian bishops, in the year 787,³ agreed to condemn the decrees of the second council of Nice, as idolatrous, though pope Adrian had assisted at that council by his legates, and used his utmost endeavours to maintain its authority. In the council of Frankfort also, the presence of two papal legates hindered not the firm agreement of Paulinus and other Italian bishops, with the decrees of the said council. These are clear proofs, that the despotism of Antichrist was, as yet, so far from being universal, that it was not owned throughout Italy itself; and, that in some parts of that country, as well as in England and France, the purity of Christian worship was still maintained. The city of Rome, indeed, and its environs, seem to have been, at this period, the most corrupt part of Christendom in Europe, nor do I remember a single missionary in these times to have been an Italian.

Paulinus, in his book against Felix, affirms, that the Eucharist is a morsel and bit of bread.⁴ He maintains, that it is spiritual life or death in the eater, as he either has faith or hath not; which seems to be a just and evangelical view of that divine ordinance, not only free from the absurdity of transubstantiation, but also expressive of the Christian article of justification, of which the reader hears very little in these cloudy times. Still more express testimonies to the essentials of salvation are not wanting in this author. He protests, that the blood of those, who have themselves been redeemed, cannot blot out the least sin; that the expiation of iniquity is the exclusive privilege of the blood of Christ alone. He⁵ defines the properties of the divine and human nature, as united in the person of Jesus Christ, with great precision; and so careful is he to describe the latter, as circumscribed and limited by the bounds of body, as to form, at least, a strong consequential argument against the notion of transubstantiation. Hear how he comments on our Lord's well-known description of eating his flesh and drinking his blood in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel: "The flesh and blood may be referred to

^a Du Pin.

² See Dr. Allix, on the ancient Churches of Piedmont.

³ Buccella et particula panis, in his dedication to Charlemagne.

⁴ Allix.

¹ Collier's Ecc. Hist. B. 2.

² Du Pin.

his human, not to his divine nature.—Yet if he were not the true God, his flesh and blood could by no means give eternal life to those, who feed upon him. Whence also John says, the blood of his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Hear also how he speaks of the intercession of Christ. "Paul is not a mediator; he is an ambassador for Christ. An advocate is He, who being also the Redeemer, exhibits to God the Father the human nature in the unity of the person of God and man. John intercedes not, but declares that this mediator is the propitiation for our sins." Once more: "The Son of God Almighty, our Almighty Lord, because He redeemed us with the price of his blood, is justly called the true Redeemer, by the confession of all, who are redeemed. He himself was not redeemed; He had never been captive: we have been redeemed, because we are captives, sold under sin," bound by the hand-writing which was against us, which He took away, nailing it to his cross, blotting it out by his blood, triumphing openly over it in himself, having finished a work which the blood of no other Redeemer could do." Such is the language of this evangelical bishop, while he

is opposing the Nestorian heresy revived by Felix. And here, at least, we see a due respect paid to Holy Scripture. Pauthinus, quotes, understands, and builds his faith upon it; and is equally remote from dependence on mere human reasonings, on the authority of the Church of Rome, or on any traditions.

This bishop was born about the year 796, near Friuli, was promoted to Aquileia in 776, was highly favoured by Charlemagne, and preached the Gospel to the pagans of Carinthia and Stiria, and to the Avars, a nation of Hunns. One of his maxims was, "Pride is that, without which no sin is or will be committed: it is the beginning, the end, and the cause of all sin." I wonder not, that he, who could see the nature of sin with so penetrating an eye, in an age of dulness, was confounded with the bishop of Hippo. He died in 804.* In a letter to Charlemagne, he complained of the want of residence in bishops, and of their attending the court. He cites a canon of the council of Sardica, in the fourth century, which forbade the absence of bishops from their dioceses, for a longer space than three weeks.

CENTURY IX.

CHAPTER I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE STATE OF RELIGION IN THIS CENTURY.

WE are penetrating into the regions of darkness, and a "land of deserts and pits, a land of drought, and of the shadow of death;"† and we are carried, by every step, into scenes still more gloomy than the former. Here and there, indeed, a glimmering ray of the sun of righteousness appears; but it is in vain to look for any steady lustre of evangelical truth and holiness. In such a situation, to pursue the chronological course of events, would be as tedious as it is unprofitable. The plan of history for each century should be modified by the existing circumstances. And there seem to be four distinct phenomena of Christian light in this period,

which will deserve to be illustrated in so many chapters: namely, in the 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th.—It shall be the business of this first chapter, to premise some general observations, which may enable the reader more clearly to understand those phenomena.

Several circumstances attended the thick darkness, which pervaded this century; and they appear to be reducible to the following heads:—the preference given to human writings above the Scriptures,—the domination of the popedom,—the accumulation of ceremonies,—and the oppression of the godly."

It was now fashionable to explain Scripture entirely by the writings of the fathers. No man was permitted, with impunity, to vary in the least from their decisions. The great apostolical rule of interpretation, namely, to compare spiritual things with spiritual, was in a manner lost. It was deemed sufficient, that such a renowned doctor had given such an interpretation. Hence, men of learning and industry paid more attention to the

* Rom. vii.

† Colos. ii.

* I have been obliged to Alban Butler for some of the foregoing particulars. But, it is remarkable that he omits his testimony against image-worship. The reader should know that Butler is a zealous Roman Catholic.

† Jerem. ii. 2.

* Centuriat. See their preface to the 9th century. I have availed myself of some of the thoughts: the whole is ingenious and spirited.

* I Cor. ii.

father, than to the sacred volume, which, through long disuse and neglect, was looked on as obscure and perplexed, and quite unfit for popular reading. Even divine truths seemed to derive their authority more from the word of man than of God; and the writings and decrees of men were no longer treated as witnesses, but usurped the office of judges of divine truth.

The popedom also grew stronger and stronger. Ignorance and superstition were so predominant, that whoever dared to oppose the bishop of Rome, drew upon himself an host of enemies. All, who looked for advancement in the Church, attached themselves to Antichrist. It is in this way only, that I can account for the very little resistance made to image-worship. We have seen, how a large part of the west rejected it. But most persons contented themselves with a simple exposition of their creed. Idolatry, in the mean time, was practically supported by the whole power and influence of the popedom.

The great accumulation of ceremonies, the observance of which was looked upon as absolutely necessary to salvation, drew off the attention of men from Christian piety. The all-important article of justification was nearly smothered in the rubbish; and pastors were so much taken up with externals, that they were almost entirely diverted from intellectual improvement.

Men of eminence, both in church and state, partly through superstition, and partly through secular views, suppressed in the bud every attempt to inform mankind. There were, however, a few, who groaned under these evils, and worshipped God in spirit and in truth.

In Asia, Mahometanism still reigned; and, the case of the Paulicians excepted,^a scarce a vestige of real godliness appeared in the eastern Church, though we ought not to doubt but the Lord had HIS SECRET ONES. Image-worship was still a subject of debate: but, at length, under the superstitious empress Theodora, it effectually triumphed in the east. Nor was there an emperor or bishop of Constantinople, in all this period, who seems to have deserved particular notice on account of vital Christian knowledge, or practical piety.^b The same judgment may be formed of the Roman popes. In this dark season, Pascasius Radbert introduced the absurd tenet of transubstantiation, which was opposed by John Scotus Erigena, and Rabanus, archbishop of Mentz, two of the most learned men of that age. But their learning seems to have had little connection with godliness, however they might

unsuccessfully plead the taste of common sense in the controversy just mentioned. For, they joined in opposing the doctrine of grace, concerning which a controversy of some importance was raised in this century.^c

In France, the views of divine grace, revived by Augustine, were more and more darkened; and we shall presently find, that a zealous advocate for them could not be heard with candour. Ado, archbishop of Vienne, was, however, an eminent exception to this account. He was indefatigable in pressing the great truths of salvation: He usually began his sermons with these, or the like words: "Hear the eternal truth, which speaks to you in the Gospel;" or "hear Jesus Christ, who saith to you." He took particular care of the examination of candidates for orders; and was a very diligent disciplinarian. He permitted none, who were ignorant of Christian principles, to be sponsors to the baptized, or to be joined in matrimony, or to be admitted to the Lord's supper, till they were better instructed. He was inflexibly vigilant against vice; and, while his own example was an honour to his profession, he enjoined his clergy to apprise him, if they should discover any slip in his conduct. Nor did king Lothaire find him obsequious to his lusts: for, through Ado's vigorous remonstrances, he was obliged to desist from a design of divorcing his queen. He sympathized, however, with sincere penitents, and was a real friend to the poor, both in a spiritual and temporal sense; and was the founder of many hospitals for their reception. See Alban Butler, Vol. XII.

In England, the decline of godliness was grievous,^d and, as^e Huntingdon remarks, Divine Providence punished the Saxons by the invasion of the Danes, the most lawless and the most savage of all mortals. The great Alfred was indeed raised up to defend his country against them. And, one of his speeches, delivered to the soldiers, before a battle, displays, at once, much good sense and a spirit of religion. He told his people, that their sins had given their enemies the advantage: that they ought to reform their own manners, in order to engage the favour of God on their side: that in other respects they had the superiority, Christians were fighting against heathens, and honest men against robbers: that theirs was not a war of ambition or conquest, but of necessary self-defence. In the battle which followed, he entirely defeated the Danes.

^y See Chap. IV.

^a There is reason, however, to believe, that a devotional, and, probably, an evangelical spirit prevailed in some parts of the British Isles. For monks, in Ireland and Scotland, who gave themselves to prayer, preaching and teaching in the middle ages, were called *Gallus*; that is, Cultores Dei. They were first known in this century by that name, at St. Andrew's parish; but were never settled in England, except at St. Peter's in York. A. Butler, Vol. V.

^b See Chap. II.

^c I say vital; for I am aware that Photus, bishop of Constantinople, flourished in this century; a person equally infamous for hypocrisy and ambition, and renowned for genius and ecclesiastical learning.

Int the preface to Gregory's Pastoral, a book translated into English, by this prince; for the benefit of his subjects, he observes, that when he came to the crown, there were very few; south of the Humber,^a who understood the common prayers in English, or, who could translate a passage of Latin into the language of their own country. He sent copies of Gregory's Pastoral into every diocese, for the benefit of the clergy: he translated also Bede's ecclesiastical history, with the same beneficent design: he himself constantly attended public worship; and, from his youth, he was wont to pray for grace, and to use serious methods to subdue his passions. Through life he seems to have maintained a beautiful consistency of character. He endeavoured to promote the knowledge of the English tongue among all persons of tolerable rank; and expressed his opinion, that those, who meant to attain eminence in the state, should also know the Latin language. It is pleasant to see the ebullitions of genius and of strong sense in an iron age, like this before us. Alfred would, doubtless, in more auspicious times, have appeared among the first of mankind. There seems no reason to doubt the sincerity of his piety. A religious spirit had this advantage in a rude age, that it was not thought to reflect disgrace on the powers of the understanding. But, this glorious sun, after it had shone a little time through an atmosphere enveloped with vapours, and had in some degree dispersed them, was not able to illumine the region, in which it appeared: the mist prevailed again, and England was covered with darkness.

It may be proper to remind the reader, that Egbert became king of Wessex, about the beginning of this century: that in 827, he became king of all England, near 400 years after the first arrival of the Saxons; and that Alfred was his grandson.

Charlemagne of France, who had flourished in the last century, died in the former part of this, aged 72, in the year 814. It is scarce worth while to recount the SPLENDID aims of this emperor, since his sanguinary ambition and his habitual lewdness, too plainly evince his want of Christian principle. He revived the western empire in Germany, which continues to this day. He was a great instrument of Providence, no doubt, in extending the pale of the Church; and, at the same time, he fixed the power of the popedom on the strongest foundations. His labours, also, to revive learning, were very great; but, like those of Alfred, they failed of success. His religious and moral char-

acter bear no comparison with that of the English monarch.

CHAPTER II.

THE PAULICIANS.

ABOUT the year 660, a new sect arose in the east, the accounts of which are far more scanty than a writer of real Church-history would wish.^a Constantine, a person who dwelt in Mananalis, an obscure town in the neighbourhood of Samosata, entertained a deacon, who, having been a prisoner among the Mahometans, had returned from captivity, and received, from the same deacon, the gift of the New Testament in the original language. Even then the laity had begun to think themselves excluded from the reading of the sacred volume; and the clergy, both in the east and the west, encouraged this apprehension. The growing ignorance, rendered by far the greatest part of the laity incapable of reading the scriptures. I do not find any ecclesiastical prohibitory decree in these times, nor was there much occasion for it. But Constantine made the best use of the deacon's present. He studied the sacred oracles, and exercised his own understanding upon them. He formed to himself a plan of divinity from the New Testament; and, as St. Paul is the most systematical of all the apostles, Constantine very properly attached himself to his writings with peculiar attention, as indeed every serious theologian must do. He will find, no doubt, the same truths interspersed through the rest of the sacred volume, and an amazing unity of design and spirit breathing through the whole; but, as it pleased God to employ one person more learned than the rest, it is highly proper, that the student should avail himself of this advantage. That Constantine was in possession of the genuine text, was acknowledged universally. A remarkable circumstance! which shews the watchful providence of God over the Scriptures! — Amidst the thousand frauds and sophisms of the times, no adulteration of them was ever permitted to take place.

The enemies of the Paulicians give them the name from some unknown teacher; but

^a Photius, B. I. contra. Manicheos. et Peter Sicles Hist. Manichæor. These are the two original sources, from which Mosheim and Gibbon have drawn their information concerning the Paulicians. Photius and Peter have not fallen into my hands; and their prejudices and passion were so great, that my reader will very probably be no great loser by the circumstance. By the assistance of the two modern authors, I shall state the few facts which are known, and give as impartial a judgment concerning the sect in question as I can. The candour of Gibbon is remarkable in this part of his history. O si sic omnia! — Mosheim Eccl. Hist. IX. Cent. — Gibbon, Vol. V. C. 64.

^b Alfred invited John Scotus, not the famous John Scotus Erigena from Old Saxony into England, and founded the University of Oxford. That of Cambridge was of a date somewhat later.

^c Cellier. Vol. I. B. 3d.

there seems scarce a doubt, that they took the name from St. Paul himself. For Constantine gave himself the name of Sylvanus; and his disciples were called Titus, Timothy, Tychicus, the names of the Apostle's fellow-labourers; and the names of the Apostolic Churches were given to the congregations formed by their labours in Armenia and Cappadocia.—Their enemies called them Gnostics or Manichees; and confounded them with those ancient sectaries, of whom it is probable that, there were then scarce any remains. It has been too customary to connect different and independent sects into one; and to suppose, that every new phenomenon in religion is nothing more than the revival of some former party. This is frequently the case, but not always. In the present instance, I see reason to suppose the Paulicians to have been perfect originals, in regard to any other denomination of Christians. The little, that has already been mentioned concerning them, carries entirely this appearance; and, I hope, it may shortly be evident, that they originated from an heavenly influence, teaching and converting them; and that, in them, we have one of those extraordinary effusions of the Divine Spirit, by which the knowledge of Christ and the practice of godliness is kept alive in the world.

The Paulicians are said to have rejected the two epistles of St. Peter. We know nothing of these men, but from the pens of their enemies. Their writings, and the lives of their eminent teachers are totally lost. In this case, common justice requires us to suspend our belief; and, if internal evidence militate in their favour, a strong presumption is formed against the credibility of a report, raised to their disadvantage. This is the case in the present instance: for, there is nothing in St. Peter's writings, that could naturally prejudice against those writings persons who cordially received the epistles of St. Paul. There is, on the other hand, the most perfect coincidence of sentiment and spirit between the two Apostles; and, in the latter epistle of St. Peter, toward the end, there is a very remarkable testimony to the inspired character and divine wisdom of St. Paul. That this sect also despised the whole of the Old Testament, is asserted, but on grounds, which seem utterly unwarrantable. For, they are said to have done this as Gnostics and Manichees, though they steadily condemned the Manichees, and complained of the injustice, which branded them with that odious name. They are also charged with holding the eternity of matter, and the existence of two independent principles; and with denying the real sufferings and the real flesh of Christ. It seems no way was found so convenient to disgrace them, as by the charge of Manicheism. But

I cannot believe that they held these tenets; not only because they themselves denied the charge, but also because they unquestionably held things perfectly inconsistent with such notions. Is it possible, that rational creatures, men endued with common understanding, could agree to revere the writings of St. Paul, and to consider them as divinely inspired, and at the same time to condemn those of the Old Testament?

The reader, who is moderately versed in Scripture, need not be told, that the Apostle is continually quoting the Old Testament, expounding and illustrating, and building his doctrines upon it: in short, that the New Testament is so indissolubly connected with the Old, that he, who despises the latter, cannot really, whatever he may pretend, respect the former as divine; and that this observation holds good in regard to all the writers of the New Testament, and to St. Paul still more particularly. It is allowed also, that the Paulicians held the common orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, with the confession and use of which the whole apparatus of the Manichean fable seems incompatible. Let the reader reflect only on the light in which Manicheism appeared to Augustine of Hippo, after he became acquainted with St. Paul, and he will probably form a just estimate of this whole subject.

This people also were perfectly free from the image-worship, which more and more pervaded the east. They were simply scriptural in the use of the sacraments: they disregarded relics, and all the fashionable equipage of superstition; and they knew no other Mediator, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sylvanus preached with great success. Pontus and Cappadocia, regions once renowned for Christian piety, were again enlightened through his labours. He and his associates were distinguished from the clergy of that day, by their scriptural names, modest titles, zeal, knowledge, activity, and boldness. Their congregations were diffused over the provinces of Asia Minor to the west of the Euphrates: six of the principal churches were called by the names of those, to whom St. Paul addressed his epistles: and Sylvanus resided in the neighbourhood of Colonia in Pontus. Roused by the growing importance of the sect, the Greek emperors began to persecute the Paulicians with the most sanguinary severity; and, under Christian forms and names, they re-acted the scenes of Galerius and Maximin. "To their other excellent deeds," says the bigoted Peter, the Scilian, "the divine and orthodox emperors added this virtue, that they ordered the Montanists and Manicheans to be capitally punished; and their

* Such, I suppose, were the opprobrious names given to the Paulicians. The real Montanists had originated in the second century, and had probably now no ex-

books, wherever found, to be committed to the flames; also, that if any person was found to have secreted them, he was to be put to death, and his goods to be confiscated. False religion, in all ages, hates the light, and supports herself by persecution, not by instruction; while the real truth, as it is in Jesus, always comes to THE LIGHT of Scripture, and exhibits that light plainly to the world by reading and expounding the sacred volume, whence alone she derives her authority.

A Greek officer, named Simeon, armed with imperial authority, came to Colonia, and apprehended Sylvanus and a number of his disciples. Stones were put into the hands of these last, and they were required to kill their pastor, as the price of their forgiveness. A person, named Justus, was the only one of the number who obeyed; and he stoned to death the father of the Paulicians, who had laboured twenty-seven years. Justus signalized himself still more by betraying his brethren; while Simeon, struck, no doubt, with the evidences of divine grace apparent in the sufferers, embraced, at length, the faith which he came to destroy, gave up the world, preached the Gospel, and died a martyr. For an hundred and fifty years these servants of Christ underwent the horrors of persecution, with Christian patience and meekness; and if the acts of their martyrdom, their preaching, and their lives were distinctly recorded, there seems no doubt, but this people would appear to have resembled those, whom the Church justly reveres as having suffered in the behalf of Christ during the three first centuries. During all this time the power of the Spirit of God was with them; and they practised the precepts of the 13th chapter to the Romans, as well as believed and felt the precious truths contained in the doctrinal chapters of the same epistle. The blood of the martyrs was, in this case, as formerly, the seed of the Church: a succession of teachers and congregations arose, and a person named Sergius, who laboured among them thirty-three years, is confessed by the bigoted historians to have been a man of extraordinary virtue. The persecution had, however, some intermissions, till at length Theodora, the same empress, who fully established image-worship, exerted herself beyond any of her predecessors against the Paulicians. Her inquisitors ransacked the lesser Asia, in search of these sectaries; and she is computed to have killed by the gibbet, by fire, and by sword, a hundred thousand persons.

We have brought down the scanty history of this people to about the year 845. To undergo a constant scene of persecution with Christian meekness, and to render both to

God and to Caesar their dues all the time, at once require and evidence the strength of real grace. Of this the Paulicians seem to have been possessed till the period just mentioned. They remembered the injunction of Rev. xiii. 10. He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword: here is the faith and patience of the saints. Let Christians believe, rejoice in God, patiently suffer, return good for evil, and still obey those whom God hath set over them. These weapons have ever been found too hard for Satan: the Church has grown exceedingly, wherever they were faithfully handled; and the power of the Gospel has prevailed. This was the case very eminently with the Church, in the era of Dioclesian's persecution. She not only outlived the storm, but also, under the conduct of Providence, became externally, as well as internally superior to her enemies. If the Paulicians had continued to act thus, similar consequences might have been rationally expected. But faith and patience failed at length. We are ignorant of the steps by which they were gradually betrayed into a secular spirit. About the year 845, they murdered two persecutors, a governor and a bishop: and a soldier called Carbeas, who commanded the guards in the imperial armies, that he might revenge his father's death, who had been slain by the inquisitors, formed a band of Paulicians, who renounced their allegiance to the emperor, negotiated with the Mahometan powers, and, by their assistance, endeavoured to establish the independency of the sect.

Theodora was succeeded by her son Michael: her cruelties and superstitions deserved the applause of Nicolas, who became pope of Rome in 858. In a letter he highly approved her conduct, and admired her for following the documents of the Holy See.¹ So truly was Antichristian tyranny now established at Rome! Michael, the son of Theodora, fled before the arms of Carbeas; and Chrysocheir, the successor of the latter, in conjunction with the Mahometans, penetrated into the heart of Asia, and desolated the fairest provinces of the Greeks. In the issue, however, Chrysocheir was slain, the Paulician fortress Tephric was reduced, and the power of the rebels was broken, though a number of them in the mountains, by the assistance of the Arabs, preserved an uncomfortable independence. The ferocious actions of the later Paulicians shew, that they had lost the spirit of true religion: their schemes of worldly ambition were likewise frustrated. And similar consequences, in more recent ages, may be found to have resulted from political methods of supporting the Gospel.

A number of this sect, about the middle

¹ instance. We see here a farther proof of the vague and delusive modes of criminating the Paulicians.

of the eighth century, had been transplanted into Thrace, who subsisted there for ages, sometimes tolerated, at other times persecuted by the reigning powers. Even to the end of the seventeenth century they still existed about the valleys of Mount Hæmus. Of their religious history during this period I can find nothing: and, in our days, they seem to have nothing more of the Paulician sect than the name. I cannot follow the author, to whom I owe much for this account,^a in his conjectures concerning this people's dispersion through the European provinces. Nor does there seem any good evidence of the Waldenses owing their origin to the Paulicians. Such speculations are too doubtful to satisfy the minds of those, who prefer solid evidence of facts to the conjectural embellitions of a warm imagination.

On the whole, we have seen, in general, satisfactory proof of the work of divine grace in Asia Minor, commencing in the latter end of the seventh century, and extended to the former part of the ninth century. But, where secular politics begin, there the life and simplicity of vital godliness end. When the Paulicians began to rebel against the established government; to return evil for evil; to ^b MINGLE AMONG THE HEATHEN, the Mahometans; and to defend their own religion by arms, negotiations, and alliances, they ceased to become the LIGHT OF THE WORLD, and the salt of the earth. Such they had been for more than a hundred and eighty years, adorning and exemplifying the real Gospel, by a life of faith, hope and charity, and by the preservation of the truth in a patient course of suffering. They looked for true riches and honour in the world to come; and, no doubt, they are not frustrated of their hope. But, when secular maxims began to prevail among them, they shone, for a time, as heroes and patriots in the false glare of human praise; but they lost the solidity of true honour, as all have done in all ages, who have descended from the grandeur of the passive spirit of conformity to Christ, and have preferred to that spirit the low ambition of earthly greatness.¹

CHAPTER III.

THE OPPOSITION MADE TO THE CORRUPTIONS OF POPERY IN THIS CENTURY, PARTICULARLY BY CLAUDIUS, BISHOP OF TURIN.

WE have seen the light of divine truth shedding its kindly influence in the east: let us

now behold the reviving power of its beams in the west. We must not expect to observe it generally illuminating either of those two great divisions of the Christian world; but only shining in some particular districts. The absolute power of the pope, the worship of images, and the invocation of Saints and Angels were opposed, as in the last century, by several princes and ecclesiastics. A council at Paris, held in the year 824, agreed with the council of Frankfort in the rejection of the decrees of the second council of Nice, and in the prohibition of image-worship. Agobard, archbishop of Lyons, wrote a book against the abuse of pictures and images; in which he maintained, that we ought not to worship any image of God, except that, which is God himself, his eternal Son; and, that there is no other Mediator between God and man, except Jesus Christ, both God and man. I have already observed, that the novel notion of transubstantiation was vigorously opposed by Rabanus and Scotus Erigena, the two most learned men of the west in this century; nor was that doctrine, as yet, established in the kingdom of Antichrist. Rabanus treats it as an upstart opinion: it may be proper to add, that Bertram, a monk of Corbie, being asked whether the same body, which was crucified, was received in the mouth of the faithful in the sacrament, answered, that "the difference is as great as between the pledge, and the thing for which the pledge is delivered; as great as between the representation and the reality." No Protestant, at this day, could speak more explicitly the sense of the Primitive Church. In Italy itself, Angilbertus, bishop of Milan, refused to own the pope's supremacy, nor did the Church of Milan submit to the Roman See till two hundred years afterwards.²

But these are only distant and remote evidences, that God had not forsaken his Church in Europe. There want not, however, more evident demonstrations of the same thing in the life and writings of Claudius, bishop of Turin, a character worthy to be held in high estimation by all, who fear God: but so little justice, in our times, is done to godliness, that while the names of statesmen, heroes, and philosophers are in every one's mouth, the name of this great reformer has, probably, been not so much as heard of, by the

Calvinists. He brands them as enemies to the adoration of the Cross of Christ, which, he says, the true Church always adored, "not only the genuine Cross, but any effigy of it, as soon as the Church obtained liberty under Christian princes." Tom. V. p. 636—638. This deserves to be considered as the testimony of a learned adversary to the evangelical character of the Paulicians, and of Claudius of Turin.

¹ I have thus far, in this chapter, availed myself of the labours of Bishop Newton on the prophesies, 3d Vol. 151, &c. In the sequel of the chapter, I make use of the remarks of Alix on the Churches of Piedmont, of the Centuristors, and of Fleury, though a Roman Catholic.

^a Gibbon.

^b Psalm cvi. ver. 35.

¹ Natalis Alexander, a voluminous French historian, and more vehemently attached to the popedom, than Frenchmen commonly are, couples the Paulicians and also Claudius of Turin, of whom the reader will hear in the next Chapter, with Wickliffites, Lutherans, and

generality of my readers. To me he seems to stand the first in the order of time among the reformers. Let us collect the little information concerning him, which we have been able to obtain.

Claudius was born in Spain. In his early years he was a chaplain in the court of Lewis the meek: he was reputed to have great knowledge in the Scriptures; in so much, that Lewis perceiving the ignorance of a great part of Italy, in regard to the doctrines of the Gospel, says Fleury, and willing to provide the churches of Piedmont with one, who might stem the growing torrent of image-worship, promoted Claudius to the See of Turin, about the year 817. Claudius answered the expectations of the emperor: by his writings, he copiously expounded the Scriptures: by his preaching, he laboriously instructed the people; "in truth," says Fleury, "he began to preach and instruct with great application." The calumnies, with which his principles were assailed, are abundantly confuted by his commentaries on various parts of the Old and New Testament, still extant in manuscripts, in various French libraries. A comment on the epistle to the Galatians, is his only work which was committed to the press. In it he everywhere asserts the equality of all the Apostles with St. Peter. And, indeed, he always owns Jesus Christ to be the only proper head of the Church. He is severe against the doctrine of human merits, and of the exaltation of traditions to a height of credibility equal to that of the Divine Word. He maintains that we are to be saved by faith alone; holds the fallibility of the Church, exposes the futility of praying for the dead, and the sinfulness of the idolatrous practices then supported by the Roman See. Such are the sentiments found in his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians.

In his commentary on St. Matthew, besides an explication of the Sacrament, very different from that of Paschasius, who defended transubstantiation, about sixteen years after, we meet with some pious sentiments worth transcribing. The words, "I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, till that day that I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," he paraphrases thus: "no longer will I delight in the carnal ceremonies of the synagogue, among which the Paschal Lamb was most distinguished; for the time of my resurrection is at hand; that day will come, when, placed in the kingdom of God, exalted to the glory of immortal life, I shall be filled with a new joy, together with you, on account of the salvation of the people born again from the fountain of the same spiritual grace.—What else does he

mean by new wine, but the immortality of renewed bodies? By saying "with you," he promises them the resurrection of their bodies, that they might put on immortality. The expression "with you," must not be referred to the same time, but to the same event of the renewal of the body. The Apostle declares that we are risen with Christ; that by the expectation of the future he might bring present joy."^a

In the end of his commentary on Leviticus, dedicated to the abbot Theodemir, he writes some things, which may exhibit and illustrate his cares and labours in the support of real godliness.

"The beauty of the Eternal Truth and Wisdom,—God grant I may always have a constant will to enjoy her, for the love of whom I have undertaken this work!—doth not exclude those who come to her: she is near to all, who seek her from the ends of the earth: she instructs within, and converts those, who behold her. No man can judge of her; no man can judge well without her. We are not commanded to go to the creature, that we may be happy, but to the Creator, who alone can fill us with bliss. The will fastening itself on the unchangeable good, obtains happiness. But when the will separates itself from the unchangeable good, and seeks her own good exclusively, or directs herself to inferior or external good, she falls from God."—These truths, conceived in the very taste of the bishop of Hippo, are followed by a long quotation from that father, which expressly forbids the worship of Saints; the substance of which is thus expressed, "We must honour them, because they deserve to be imitated, not worship them with an act of religion. We envy not their bliss, because they enjoy God without molestation, but we love them the more, because we hope for something, correspondent to these their excellencies, from him, who is our God as well as theirs." These things, says Claudius, are the strongest mysteries of our faith. In defending this truth, I am become a reproach to my neighbours; those, who see me, scoff at me, and point at me to one another. But the Father of mercies and the God of all consolations, has comforted me in my tribulations,^b that I may be able to comfort others, that are oppressed with sorrow and affliction. I rely on the protection of him, who has armed me with the armour of righteousness and of faith, the tried shield for my eternal salvation."

Complaints had, it seems, been made against Claudius, at the court of Lewis, for having broken down images through his diocese, and for having written against the wor-

^a Fleury, Vol. V. B. 47. In this and some other matters, the testimony of a Roman Catholic to the character of the first Protestant Reformer, is of great weight.

^b This can hardly be allowed to be the whole of St. Paul's meaning, in the expression "risen with Christ;" nevertheless, the ideas of Claudius are good, so far as he goes.

^c 2 Cor. I.

ship of them. Being reproached by Theodemer for his conduct, Claudius wrote an apology, of which the following is an extract: "Being obliged to accept the bishopric, when I came to Turin, I found all the churches full of abominations and images; and because I began to destroy what every one adored, every one began to open his mouth against me.—They say, we do not believe, that there is any thing divine in the image; we only reverence it in honour of the person, whom it represents. I answer, if they, who have quitted the worship of devils, honour the images of saints, they have not forsaken idols, they have only changed the names. For whether you paint upon a wall the pictures of St. Peter or St. Paul, or those of Jupiter, Saturn, or Mercury, they are now neither gods, nor apostles, nor men. The name is changed, the error continues the same. If men must be adored, there would be less absurdity in adoring them when alive, while they are the image of God, than after they are dead, when they only resemble stocks and stones. And if we are not allowed to adore the works of God, much less are we allowed to adore the works of men.—If the Cross of Christ ought to be adored, because he was nailed to it, for the same reason we ought to adore mangera, because he was laid in one; and swaddling-clothes, because he was wrapped in them." He goes on to mention other similar instances, and adds, "we have not been ordered to adore the cross, but to bear it, and to deny ourselves.—As to your assertion, that I speak against the going to Rome by way of penance, it is not true; I neither approve nor disapprove such pilgrimages; to some they are not useful, to others they are not prejudicial. It is a great perversion of the words 'thou art Peter,' &c. to infer from them, that eternal life is to be gained by a journey to Rome, and by the intercession of St. Peter.—The Apostolic, that is, the pope, is not he, who fills the See of the Apostle, but he who discharges its duties."

Such, says Fleury, were the errors of Claudius of Turin. He then tells us, that they were refuted by a recluse called Dungal. He gives us a few extracts from this writer, which it will be perfectly needless to recite; for, as Fleury owns, Dungal hardly makes use of any thing else but citations, and "in truth," continues he, "the main proofs in this matter have always been the tradition and constant usage of the Church." In the judgment of men who determine controversies, which enter into the essence of Christianity by the Scriptures alone, the victory of Claudius in this dispute is decisive.

We are obliged, however, to Dungal, for

the preservation of the *extrema* of the apology. In addition to the argumentative parts, there are also some pathetic exhortations interspersed in the work, which shew the ardour of the bishop's mind, and the charitable zeal for divine truth and for the salvation of souls, with which he was endowed. I shall present the reader with a few sentences. "All these things are ridiculous, rather worthy of lamentation than of grave discussion; but we are obliged to describe them, in opposition to fools, and to declaim against those hearts of stone, whom the arrows and sentences of the Divine Word cannot pierce, and therefore we are under a necessity to assault them in this manner. Come to yourselves again, ye wretched transgressors: why are ye gone astray from truth, and are fallen in love with vanity? why do you make souls, by troops, to become the associates of devils, by the horrible sacrifice of your idols, estranging them from their Creator, and precipitating them into everlasting damnation?—Return, ye blind, to your light.—Shall we not believe God, when he swears, that neither Noah, nor Daniel, nor Job 'shall deliver son or daughter by their righteousness?' For this end he makes the declaration, that none might put confidence in the intercession of Saints.—Ye fools, who run to Rome, to seek there for the intercession of an Apostle, when will ye be wise? What would St. Augustine say of you, whom we have so often quoted?"

If the works of this great and good man had been published as faithfully as those of his adversaries, I doubt not but he would appear to us in a much more striking light than he can do from a few imperfect quotations. But his writings were either suppressed or secreted. The reign of idolatry had taken place, and the world worshipped THE BEAST. The labours, however, of Claudius, were not in vain: he checked the growing evil in his own diocese at least; and Romish writers have owned, that the valleys of Piedmont, which belonged to his bishopric, preserved his opinions in the ninth and tenth centuries. Whence it is probable, that the Churches of the Waldenses were either derived, or at least received much increase and confirmation from his labours.

If we look at the subject matter of this bishop's preaching and expositions, in an evangelical view, it will appear, that the controversy between him and his adversaries was, whether man shall be justified before God BY JESUS CHRIST THROUGH FAITH ALONE, or whether he shall betake himself to OTHER REFUGES for the peace of his disquieted conscience. What those other refuges may be, will much depend on the customs and habits of the times in which a man lives. In an age

like our own, of great civilization and refinement, they will, chiefly, be acts of humanity and kindness to the needy: in an age of superstition, they will be ceremonial observances, and the whole apparatus of WILL-WORSHIP.* Against the false reliefs of a burdened conscience, which the popedom exhibited, this first Protestant reformer militated in much Christian zeal, and pointed out to his hearers and his readers the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the sole and all-sufficient object of dependence. With what success this was done among his people we have no account; but, doubtless, so great a light was not set up in vain; and could I recite the effects of his labours in Piedmont, the account would in all probability be both pleasing and profitable to evangelical minds. Let us see what farther discoveries we can make of his spirit and views from the extracts of his writings drawn from another of his adversaries.

This[†] was JONAS, BISHOP OF ORLEANS. He wrote three books against Claudius, filled with invectives. He mentions, however, such reasonings made use of by his adversary, as it was not in his power to overturn, particularly the authority of the second commandment, on which hinge, indeed, the whole controversy turns, so far as it relates to the worship of images. In regard to pilgrimages to Rome, Claudius observes, that the greater part, in consequence of them, become worse men than they were before. In opposing the popedom, he observes, on account of those words of our Lord, "I will give to thee the keys," &c. ignorant men, for the sake of obtaining eternal life, setting aside all spiritual understanding, will go to Rome. Hence we see, that the power of the popedom was much founded on the misguided consciences of men. Persons distressed, on account of their sins, naturally catch at every support, which offers them relief. And, the true light of the Gospel of peace no longer shining, they availed themselves of the delusory consolations offered by the popedom; and thus, at once, gained a false peace, hardened themselves in real wickedness, and supported the grandeur of Antichrist. What a blessing is the real Gospel! it both consoles and sanctifies the sinner, and removes the most powerful incitements to superstition. But, to proceed with the words of Claudius. "It is not said, 'whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound on earth.'—By this we should know, that the ministry of the bishops of the Church, continues only, so long as they remain upon earth. After they have left this world, it ceases: St. Peter has no longer any influence in the government of the Church militant; and those, who succeed

in the vacant places, exercise the office, so long as they live indeed, but no longer."[‡] From the year 823, Claudius wrote against the prevailing superstition, and lived to the year 839. That he was not put to death for confessing the real faith of Christ, seems to have been, under Providence, owing to the protection of the French court. The cause, which he espoused, was still, in part, supported in the western Churches; and the Roman hierarchy was not yet able to establish idolatry in its full extent, and to punish all its opposers. It is proper to add, that even the adversaries of Claudius did not insist on the worship of images; they only asserted, that they were innocent and useful. So far were the decrees of the papacy from being owned as decisive, through Europe. At the same time, it must be confessed, that the middle path, which first had the sanction of Gregory, and was afterwards confirmed by the Carolin books and the council of Frankfort, naturally paved the way for the gradual establishment of idolatry.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CASE OF GOTTESCHALCUS.

THE subject of predestination and grace had been formerly controverted, in the churches of France, with a considerable degree of acuteness and ingenuity, and what is still more pleasing to a Christian mind, with seriousness, candour, and charity. We have seen with what zeal the doctrine of divine grace had been defended and illustrated by the followers of Augustine, and what a salutary influence had attended that doctrine on the knowledge, the spirit, and the lives of Christians. It has appeared also, that many, who, partly through an ill-grounded fear of pernicious consequences, and partly through a misunderstanding of the nature of the subject, were averse to the sentiments of Augustine, did still sincerely abhor Pelagianism, and, with an happy inconsistency, lived humbly dependent on divine grace alone, though they maintained Semi-Pelagianism in their sentiments. But, as superstition, idolatry, and ignorance increased, the truly evangelical views of Augustine were more and more thrown into the shade, and the case of Gotteschalculus shewed, that it was now

* I have added a word or two explanatory of the meaning, which, on account of the imperfection of the quotation, is sufficiently embarrassed. I apprehend, he is inferring from the real words of our Lord, "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven," that St. Peter's episcopal acts terminated with his life; whereas, if it had been said, "whatsoever thou shalt bind in heaven, shall be bound on earth, some countenance might seem to be given to the idea of the continuance of his power on earth, in the persons of his successors. Cent. Mag. Cent. IX. 118.

* See Colon. ib.

† Centuriat. Magd. Cent. IX.

no longer permitted to a divine to promulge the sentiments of the bishop of Hippo with impunity.

Gotteschalculus was born in Germany: from early life he had been a monk; and had devoted himself to theological inquiries. He was peculiarly fond of the writings of Augustine, and entered with much zeal into his sentiments.* That he really held the doctrines of that father, seems evident from the account, which is transmitted to us, though it be but scanty. He expressly owned, that the wicked were condemned for their own demerits: and, if he was charged with making God the author of sin, it is no more than what befel the bishop of Hippo; and Fleury himself owns, that he was misrepresented by his adversaries. The most culpable thing, which I find in him, if indeed a certain confession of faith, ascribed to him, be genuine, is this, that he offered to undergo a trial by fire, on this condition, that if he was preserved unhurt, his doctrine should be allowed to be divine. If he was really guilty of this enthusiastic presumption, the issue of the persecution, which he afterwards underwent, was calculated to humble him, and cause him to learn more practically than he had ever done, the real power of those doctrines, for which he honestly suffered.

About the year 846, he left his monastery, and went into Dalmatia and Pannonia, where he spread the doctrines of Augustine, under a pretence, it was said by his enemies, of preaching the Gospel to the infidels. At his return, he remained some time in Lombardy, and in 847, he held a conference with Notingus, bishop of Vienne, concerning predestination. His zeal gave offence to the bishop, who prevailed on Rabanus, the archbishop of Mentz, to undertake the confutation of the novel heresy, as it was now decreed. Rabanus calumniated Gotteschalculus with those monstrous and licentious consequences, with which the doctrines of divine grace have in all ages been aspersed, and from which St. Paul himself was not exempted: and having dressed the sentiments of his adversary in the most odious colours, he found it no hard task, to expose him to infamy. The learned monk undertook to defend himself in writing, and proposed the subject to the consideration of the most able men of his time; and, against the great credit and authority of his adversary, he opposed the renowned name of Augustine. But no cause ever appeared with more disadvan-

tage in our times than that of Gotteschalculus. For we have not his treatise, composed against Rabanus; only some fragments of it have been preserved to us, by Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, who, the reader will soon be convinced, was not a man fit to be trusted with the care of the reputation of Gotteschalculus. In a synod held at Mentz, the latter was condemned; and Rabanus observing that the monk was of the diocese of Soissons, which was subject to the archbishop of Rheims, sent him to Hincmar, calling him a vagabond, and declaring that he had seduced several persons, who were become less careful of their salvation, since they had learned from Gotteschalculus to say, why should I labour for my salvation? If I am predestinated to damnation, I cannot avoid it; and, on the contrary, if I am predestinated to salvation, whatever sins I am guilty of, I shall certainly be saved.† Thus have I in a few words, said he, shewed you his doctrine.

Hincmar entered fully into the views of Rabanus; and, in a council of bishops, examined Gotteschalculus, who still maintained his doctrine with firmness. On this account, the Monk was condemned as an heretic, degraded from the priesthood, and ordered to be beaten with rods and imprisoned. As nothing, however, was proved against him, except his adherence to the sentiments of Augustine, which where still held in estimation in the Church, this shows, says Du Pin, that he was an injured man.

And now the presumptuous boasts of Gotteschalculus, if they were his boasts indeed, met with an humiliating check. For, while he was whipped in the presence of the emperor Charles and the bishops with great severity, and was given to understand that he must cast into the fire with his own hand a writing, in which he had made a collection of Scripture-texts, in order to prove his opinion, he, at length, overpowered by his sufferings; dropped the book into the flames; after which he was kept close prisoner by Hincmar in a monastery. This method of convincing an heretic of his errors, seems, however, to have been by no means satisfactory to him, who had made use of it. For Hincmar still took pains to persuade Gotteschalculus to retract his sentiments, but in vain. The injured pastor maintained, with his last breath, the doctrine for which he suffered, and died in prison in the year 870.‡

Hincmar, hearing that he lay at the point

* I have extracted the best account of this person which I could, from Fleury and Du Pin, both Roman Catholic writers; I have availed myself also of the remarks of Mosheim; from the writings of the Magduburgian Centuriators, where I might have expected the most equitable and the most just account, I could collect nothing. They handle the subject briefly and confusedly, and join with the enemies of Gotteschalculus in condemning him, without affording their readers any proper materials, on which they might form a judgment for themselves.

† It is evident, that such reasoning as this, might, with equal plausibility, be alleged against the doctrine of the 18th Chapter, to the Romans. Whoever would see this method of argumentation sifted to the bottom, may consult the admirable Analogy of Butler, C. VI. Part I. who, though no predestinarian in his sentiments, candidly admits, and, I think, irrefragably proves, the fallacy of the vulgar objections.
‡ Cave.

of death, sent him a formulary, which he was to subscribe, in order to his being received into the communion of the Church. Gotteschalculus rejected the offer with indignation. He refused to retract to the last; and was denied Christian burial, by the orders of Hincmar.

This is all that I can find material concerning Gotteschalculus. That he was an humble and sincere follower of Christ, in the main, will scarce be doubted by those, who make a fair estimate of his constancy in suffering, and at the same time reflect, that no moral turpitude is affixed to his memory. Even in that age there wanted not men, who remonstrated loudly against the barbarity, with which he had been treated. Remigius, archbishop of Lyons, distinguished himself among these; and, in a council held at Valence, in Dauphiny, in the year 855, both Gotteschalculus and his doctrine were vindicated and defended. Two subsequent councils confirmed the decrees of this council. The Churches of Lyons, Vienne, and Arles, formerly renowned for piety, vigorously supported the sentiments of Gotteschalculus; and it was apparent, that all relish for the doctrines of grace was not lost in the Church. It is very extraordinary, that the cause of Gotteschalculus should prove, in the end, victorious, while he himself remained under the power of persecution. But the great secular influence of Hincmar, who for near forty years presided at Rheims, and made himself highly useful to kings and princes, seems to account for this.

It would be uninteresting to detail an account of the writings on both sides, which were published on the occasion of this controversy. One lesson the case before us is peculiarly calculated to teach, namely, not to condemn any person for consequences, which others may draw from his doctrine, and which he himself both speculatively and practically disavows. This injustice was never more flagrantly committed, than in the transactions, which we have briefly reviewed. Of Hincmar, much information indeed is left us in ecclesiastical story; but I do not seem to have any more employment for him in this work, than I have for the princes of France and Germany of that period. It is not hard to form, on the whole, some estimate of the state of religion at that time in France. The spirit of Christianity was much decayed; but there were, doubtless, a number of persons, to whom Christ and his grace were precious: and the influence of evangelical truth was still so strong, that all the cruelty, activity, and artifice of one of the most subtle politicians of that age, for such was Hincmar, were not able to extirpate it.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

In this century the Churches of the east and west began to be separated from one another, through the pride and ambition of the pontiffs of Rome and Constantinople. Of such a division, which makes a great noise, in what is commonly called ecclesiastical history, it is sufficient for an historian of the Church of Christ, to say, that the wound, after repeated attempts, was never healed. Both the east and the west, indeed, were full of idolatry and darkness, and seemed to vie with each other in supporting the kingdom of Satan. Providence, however, made use of the ambitious spirit of the prelates for the still more extensive propagation of the Gospel. In this chapter I shall collect the information upon this subject, which may be extracted from an enormous mass of ecclesiastical rubbish; and, at the same time, shall lay before my readers some evidences of the progress of the good work, among the nations, which had been, in part, evangelized in the two last centuries.

Constantine, afterwards called Cyril, was born at Thessalonica, of a Roman family, and was educated at Constantinople. In 846, the famous Photius, who by much iniquity, at length, obtained the bishopric of Constantinople, envying Ignatius, at that time bishop, disputed in opposition to him, that every man had two souls. Being reproved by Cyril, he said, that he meant not to hurt any one, but only to try the logical abilities of Ignatius. "You have thrown your darts into the crowd," said Cyril, "yet pretend that none will be hurt. How keen soever the eyes of your wisdom be, they are blinded by the smoke of avarice and envy. Your passion against Ignatius has deceived you." Cyril indeed seems to have been as much superior to Photius in piety, as he was his inferior in learning: he became one of the most active and useful missionaries of this century; and Providence opened to him a door of solid utility among the idolatrous nations.*

The Bulgarians were a barbarous and savage people, whose neighbourhood had long been troublesome to the Greek emperors. The sister of their king Bogoris, having been taken captive in a military incursion, was brought to Constantinople, and there received Christianity. Upon her redemption and return to her own country, she gave a strong evidence, that her change of religion had been more than nominal. She was struck

* See Alban Butler, Vol. XII.

with grief and compassion, to see the king, her brother, enslaved to idolatry; and she used the most cogent arguments in her power, in order to convince him of the vanity of his worship. Bogoris was affected with her arguments; but was not prevailed upon to receive the Gospel, till, a famine and a plague appearing in Bulgaria, she persuaded him to pray to the God of the Christians. He did so, and the plague ceased. There was something so remarkable in the event, that Bogoris was induced to send for missionaries to Constantinople; and at length received baptism, together with many of his people.^a Cyril and his devout brother Methodius, were the instruments of these blessings to the Bulgarians. Bogoris had desired Methodius to draw him a picture. Methodius chose for his subject the last judgment, and explained it. This is supposed to have induced the king to receive baptism. The event happened about the year 861.^b That same pope Nicolas, who so warmly applauded the sanguinary exploits of the empress Theodora against the Paulicians, rejoiced at the opportunity, which this religious change among the Bulgarians afforded him of extending his influence. He sent bishops, who preached and baptised throughout the country: and Bogoris sent his son to Rome, with many Lords: he consulted the pope on a variety of subjects, and intreated him to send pastors into Bulgaria. Nicolas rejoiced, says Fleury,^c not only on account of the conversion of the Bulgarians, but the more, because they came so far to seek instruction from the holy See. They had, however, though attended with many superstitions, the word of God, and the name of Christ introduced among them. The Saviour, in some sense, was preached, notwithstanding that pride and sinister motives predominated altogether in the Roman See; and St. Paul, in such a case, would have said, "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."^d Nor is there any reason to believe, that all the missionaries would be no less corrupt than the pope: on the contrary, we cannot doubt but the word was not preached altogether in vain. These transactions took place about the year 866.

About the same time Cyril, and his brother Methodius, missionaries among the Bulgarians, laboured also among the Slavonians and the Chazari.^e These people lived on the banks of the Danube, and begged the emperor Michael III. and his mother Theodora, to send them some instructors. Cyril and his brother Methodius were sent to preach to them. The Cham and his whole nation were baptized: and Cyril gave a noble proof of his disinterestedness in refusing

those presents, which the munificence of the prince would have heaped upon him. See Alban Butler, Vol. 12.

Cyril arriving at Cherson, continued there some time, to learn the language of the Chazari; which is supposed to have been the Slavonian tongue, because it is certain, that Constantine translated the sacred Books into that language. And as the people had not then the use of letters, he invented an alphabet for their use, and was very successful in teaching Christianity among the Chazari. He made the greater impression on their minds, because of the unquestionable proofs, which he gave them of his disinterestedness. After this, Bartilas, prince of Moravia, understanding what had been done among the Chazari, desired the Greek emperor Michael to send some missionaries to instruct his people likewise in Christianity. Michael sent the same Constantine and Methodius, who carried with them the same Slavonian Gospel, taught the children the letters, which they had invented, laboured in their mission, and instructed the people four years and a half.

The king of Moravia was baptized with many of his subjects. Cyril died a monk: Methodius was consecrated bishop of Moravia. The Slavonian tongue, invented by these two missionaries, is, to this day, used in the liturgy of the Moravians. Complaint was made to Pope John VIII. of the novelty of worshipping in a barbarous tongue; but he condescended to own himself satisfied with the reasons assigned by the missionaries. Bogoris, king of Bulgaria, gave up his crown about the year 880, and retired into a monastery. Methodius, after a long course of labours, died in an advanced age. See Alban Butler, Vol. 12.

These were noble works, and some divine unction, amidst all the superstitions, no doubt, attended them. In the mean time, Nicolas of Rome, and Photius of Constantinople, two of the proudest men of any age, were acrimoniously inveighing against one another, and striving each to secure to himself the obedience of the new converts. There is reason to hope, that the missionaries themselves were of a better spirit: and if I had materials of their transactions before me, I would present them with pleasure to the reader; but the squabbles of the prelates themselves, for ecclesiastical dominion, and the effects of those squabbles, are scarce worth his attention.

It appears from one of the invectives of Photius, against Nicolas, that the Russians, hitherto barbarous and savage, had received a Christian bishop, and were then under instructions. Also, about the year 867, certain provinces of Dalmatia sent an embassy to Constantinople, imploring the emperor Basilus to supply them with Christian teachers. Their request was granted, and

^a Porphyrogenetus.

^b Fleury, B. L. 46.

^c Philip. l. 18.

^d See Alban Butler, Vol. XII.

^e Fleury, B. L. 54.

the pale of the Church was extended throughout those provinces.¹

If we turn our eyes toward the countries, which had been evangelized in the last century, we may discern some traces of the spirit of godliness still remaining among them. Length of time, under the influence of natural depravity, had not, as yet, destroyed all the seeds of that divine simplicity, which, as we have had repeated occasion to observe, is always the most pure in the infancy of religion. Frederic of Devonshire, nephew to Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, so renowned in the last century, was appointed bishop of Utrecht; and dining with the emperor, Lewis the Meek, was exhorted by him to discharge his office with faithfulness and integrity. The bishop, pointing to a fish on the table, asked whether it was proper to take hold of it by the head or by the tail. "By the head, to be sure," replied the emperor. "Then I must begin my career of faithfulness," answered Frederic, "with your majesty." He proceeded to rebuke the emperor for an incestuous connection, which he openly maintained with Judith the empress; and, in the spirit of John the Baptist, told him, "that it was not lawful for him to have her." Lewis had not expected this salute; and, like Herod, was not disposed to give up his Herodias. No sooner did the empress hear of this rebuke, than, in the true temper of an incensed adulteress, she began to plot the destruction of Frederic; and, by the help of assassins, she at length effected it. Frederic being mortally wounded, insisted, however, that no blood should be shed on his account; and died in a spirit of martyrdom worthy of the relation of Boniface. In him the Hollanders lost a faithful prelate; but his death would preach a salutary doctrine among them.—Frederic was murdered about the year 833.²

Haymo, a monk of Fulda, a scholar of Alcuin,³ was chosen bishop of Halberstadt in Saxony, in the year 841. He was by descent an Englishman, a relation of Bede, and took much pains in preaching to the people. His writings are voluminous, but the matter of them is, chiefly, extracted from the fathers. He assisted in the condemnation of Gotteschalcus at Mentz; nor is it hard to conceive, that a pious person might be deceived by the elaborate misrepresentations of Rabanus; though I should think it very improbable, that Haymo would be at all concerned in the barbarities afterwards exercised on the supposed heretic at Rheims. For Haymo seems to have thought and written on the doctrines of grace, with more unction and vigour than most of his contemporaries. He composed comments on many

parts of the Holy Scriptures. A few specimens may serve to shew what sort of doctrine was then preached to the recent Churches of Germany.

"By the book of life, we ought to understand the divine predestination, as it is written, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

"Man of himself departing from God, returns not of himself to God.—God works all in all; by which words human arrogance is removed, since without the Holy Spirit our weakness can effect no real good, whether great or small."⁴

"We are not only unable to perfect any good, without divine grace and mercy, preceding and following us, but not even to think any. For the grace of God prevents us, that we may be willing, and follows us, that we may be able.—Every good thing that we have, the good will, and the good work, is not from ourselves, but from God."

His views of the distinction between the law and the Gospel, a subject in his time very little understood, have a considerable degree of perspicuity. "In the law, no room is reserved for repentance, but its language is, the soul that sinneth shall die. The Gospel saith, I will not the death of a sinner.—The law is not of faith.¹ It is the province of faith, to believe and to hope things invisible. The law therefore is not fulfilled by faith, but by works. But the Gospel is fulfilled by faith rather than by works; for faith alone saves!² Precious sentiments! well understood by serious and humble spirits, coming to Christ for rest, who find themselves by the law debarred of all hope of salvation, because of their consciousness of entire depravity. It is not necessary to give distinct quotations, in order to prove, that he has the same imperfect and inaccurate views of justification, which we have observed in Augustine.

"The faith, by which we believe in God, is given by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: it is not in man naturally, it is given by God; for, if it were in us, by nature, all would have it.—Faith, remission of sins, and all the gifts of God, are freely given to believers."³

Does it not appear a cruel thing to disfigure such lovely pictures of evangelical truth? but historical veracity is a stubborn thing. This same Haymo, who knew so much of Christ, was so infected with the growth of idolatrous superstition, that, in an homily concerning virgins, he says, "it is highly fitting, that we supplicate her,"—he means some virgin, whose festival he was then celebrating,—"with devout prayers, that she may make us comfortable in this life by her

¹ Porphyrogen. See Mosheim, Chap. I. Cent. IX.
² Ingulph's Hist. See Collier's Ecc. Hist. I Vol.
³ Du Pin, Cent. IX.

¹ Magd. Cent. IX. p. 52.
² Galatians iii. 12.
³ Magd. p. 67.

⁴ Id. p. 60.
 —Magd. 64.

merits and prayers, and in the next acceptable to God.^o How inconsistent are these sentiments with his avowed faith in the Mediator! But such was the torrent of the times!—I see Germany, which had been happily tutored in the infant simplicity of Christian faith, gradually perverted by the idolatry, which derived its strength from the papal dominion. Haymo, however, most probably did not mean what he said, in the full import of his own words; and he seems to have felt so sincerely the spirit of Gospel-truth, that I am tempted to suppose, that his homilies were interpolated by what are called *PIOUS FRAUDS*, than which practice nothing was more common in the dark ages.

Haymo continued bishop of Halberstadt for twelve years, and died in 853. A rare light, which shone in the midst of darkness!

We have seen some evidences of the power of Christian truth, in this century, among the recent Churches of Germany and Holland. Let us now look to the north of Europe, and see, by what gradations, Divine Providence paved the way for the propagation of the Gospel in the frozen regions of Scandinavia,^o and on the shores of the Baltic, which had hitherto been enveloped in the most deplorable darkness of paganism.

Adelard, cousin-german to Charlemagne, was a bright luminary in the Christian world at the beginning of this century. He had been invited to the court in his youth: but fearing the infection of such a mode of life, he had retired; and, at the age of twenty years, became a monk of Corbie, in Picardy,^o and was at length chosen abbot of the monastery. His imperial relation, however, forced him again to attend the court, where he still preserved the dispositions of a recluse, and took every opportunity, which business allowed, for private prayer and meditation. After the death of Charlemagne, he was, on unjust suspicions, banished by Lewis the Meek, to a monastery on the coast of Aquitaine, in the isle of Here. After a banishment of five years, Lewis, sensible at length of his own injustice, recalled Adelard, and heaped on him the highest honours. The monk was, however, the same man in prosperity and in adversity, and in 823 obtained leave to return to his Corbie. Every week he addressed each of the monks in particular: he exhorted them in pathetic discourses; and laboured for the spiritual good of the country around his monastery. His liberality seems to have bordered on excess: his humility induced him to receive advice from the meanest monk: when he was desired to live less austere, he would frequently say, I will

take care of your servant, that he may be enabled to attend on you the longer. Another, Adelard, who had governed the monastery during his banishment, by the direction of the first Adelard prepared the foundation of a distinct monastery, called new Corbie, near Paderborn, beside the Weser, as a nursery for evangelical labourers, who should instruct the northern nations. The first Adelard completed the scheme: went himself to new Corbie twice; and settled its discipline. The success of this truly charitable project was great: many learned and zealous missionaries were furnished from the new seminary; and it became a light to the north of Europe. Adelard promoted learning in his monasteries: instructed the people both in Latin and French; and, after his second return from Germany to old Corbie, he died in 827, aged 73. Such is the account given us of Adelard. A character,—there is reason to believe,—of eminent piety, the fruits of whose faithful labours appear to have been still greater after his death than during his life. To convert monasteries into seminaries of pastoral education, was a thought far above the taste of the age in which he lived; and tended to emancipate those superstitious institutions from the unprofitable and illiberal bondage, in which they had subsisted for many generations.

In^o the year 814, Harold, king of Denmark, being expelled from his dominions, implored the protection of the emperor Lewis, the son and successor of Charlemagne. That prince persuaded him to receive Christian baptism; and foreseeing that Harold's reception of Christianity would increase the difficulty of his restoration, he gave him a district in Frieze-land for his present maintenance. Lewis, dismissing Harold to his own country, inquired after some pious person, who might accompany him, and confirm both the king and his attendants in the Christian religion. But it was not easy to find a man disposed to undertake such a journey. At length Vala, abbot of old Corbie, who had succeeded his brother Adelard, whose history we have just considered, said to the emperor, "I have, in my monastery, a monk, who earnestly wishes to suffer for the sake of Christ; a man of understanding and integrity, and peculiarly fitted for such a work. But I cannot promise, that he will undertake the journey." The emperor ordered him to send for the man; Anscarius was his name. When the nature of the employment was opened to the monk, he professed his readiness to go. "I by no means command you," said Vala, to enter on so difficult and dan-

^o Magd. p. 111.

^o This term commonly includes the three kingdoms of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

^o A. Butler, Vol. I.

^o I have extracted the subsequent account of Anscarius from various parts of Fleury, in his history of the 9th century; not without an attention also to the history of the same missionary in Alban Butler, and in the Centur. Magd.

gious a service; I leave it to your option." Anscarius, however, persisted in his resolution: it was matter of surprise to many, that he should choose to expose himself among strangers, barbarians, and pagans: much pains were taken by many to dissuade him; but in vain: while preparations were making for his departure, he gave himself up to reading and prayer. This excellent monk had been employed, as a teacher, both in old and new Corbie, and had distinguished himself by his talents and virtues. Aubert, a monk of noble birth, a great confidant of Vala, and steward of his house, offered himself as a companion to Anscarius. Harold, with the two strangers, proceeded on his journey; but neither he nor his attendants, rude and barbarous in their manners, were at all solicitous for the accommodation of the missionaries, who therefore suffered much in the beginning of their journey. When the company arrived at Cologne, Hadebald the archbishop, commiserating the two strangers, gave them a bark, in which they might convey their effects. Harold, struck with the convenience of the accommodation, entered into the vessel with the missionaries; and they went down the Rhine into the sea, and came to the frontiers of Denmark. But Harold finding access to his dominions impossible, because of the power of those, who had usurped the sovereignty, remained in Friesland, in the district assigned to him by the emperor.

This king of Denmark seems to have been appointed by Divine Providence, only as an instrument to introduce Anscarius into the mission. For we hear little more of him afterwards. The two French monks laboured with zeal and success in Friesland, both among Christians and pagans. Harold sent some of his own slaves to be taught by them; and, in a little time, they had above twelve children in their school. Above two years they laboured, and were made instruments of good to souls: after this Aubert ended his days by a disease.

About the year 829, many Swedes having expressed a desire to be instructed in Christianity, Anscarius received a commission from the emperor Lewis to visit Sweden. Another monk of old Corbie, Vitmar by name, was assigned as his companion; and a pastor was left to attend on king Harold, in the room of Anscarius. In the passage, the two missionaries were met by pirates, who took the ship and all its effects. On this occasion, Anscarius lost the emperor's presents, and forty volumes, which he had collected for the use of the ministry. But his mind was still determined: and he and his partner having with difficulty got to land, they gave themselves up to the direction of Providence, and walked on foot a long way, now and then crossing some arms of the sea

in boats. Such are the triumphs of Christian faith and love. They arrived at Birca, from the ruins of which, Stockholm took its rise, though built at some distance from it. The king of Sweden received them favourably; and his council unanimously agreed to permit them to remain in the country, and to preach the Gospel. Success attended their pious efforts. Many Christian captives in Sweden rejoiced at the opportunity of the communion of Saints which was now restored to them; and, among others, Herigarius, governor of the city, was baptized. This man erected a church on his own estate, and persevered in the profession and support of the Gospel.

After six months, the two missionaries returned with letters, written by the king's own hand, into France, and informed Lewis of their success. The consequence was, that Anscarius was appointed archbishop of Hamburg. This great city, being in the neighbourhood of Denmark, was henceforth looked on as the metropolis of all the countries north of the Elb, which should embrace Christianity. The mission into Denmark, was at the same time attended to; and Gausbert, a relation of Ebbo, archbishop of Rheims, who, as well as Anscarius, was concerned in these missions, was sent to reside as a bishop in Sweden: there the number of Christians increased. But perhaps the reader has anticipated the observation; namely, that it was the genius of these dark ages, to provide for the hierarchy prematurely; and to constitute bishops and dioceses over large districts, in which scarce any Christians were to be found.

Anscarius,—such was the ecclesiastical discipline of the times,—by the order of the emperor Lewis, went to Rome, that he might receive the confirmation of the new archbishopric of Hamburg. Returning to his diocese, he gained over many pagans, brought up children in the Christian faith, and redeemed captives, whom he instructed and employed in the ministry. In the year 845, his faith was tried by a severe affliction. Hamburg was besieged, taken, and pillaged by the Normans, and he himself escaped with difficulty. On this occasion, he lost all his effects; but his mind was so serene, that he was not heard to complain: "The Lord gave," said he, "and the Lord hath taken away." It was no inconsiderable addition to his sufferings, to hear, that Gausbert, whom he had sent into Sweden, was banished through a popular insurrection; in consequence of which, the work of the ministry was for some years at a stand in that country. Anscarius, reduced to great poverty, and deserted by many of his followers, persisted still with unwearied patience in the

exercise of his mission in the north of Europe, till the bishopric of Bremen was conferred upon him. Hamburg and Bremen were from that time considered as united in one diocese. It was not till some pains were taken to overcome his scruples, that he could be prevailed on to accept of this provision for his wants. About the year 852, Anscarius sent a priest, called Ardgarius, into Sweden, to strengthen the faith of the few Christians, who remained there. Among these was Herigarius, who had supported the cause of Christ, while it was in the most feeble and afflicted state.

Though Anscarius had made no great impression on Sweden, he was not discouraged in his views of propagating the faith in the north. He still had his eye on Denmark, which had been his first object: and having gained the friendship of Eric, who reigned there, he was enabled to gain a footing in that country; and to plant the Gospel with some success at Sleswick, a port then much frequented by merchants. Many persons, who had been baptized at Hamburg, resided there; and a number of pagans were induced to countenance Christianity in some degree. Anscarius, through the friendship of Eric, found means also to visit Sweden once more. A recommendatory letter from that prince to Olaus, king of Sweden, ensured him a favourable reception in the last mentioned country. The zealous bishop arrived at Birca, where a pagan, who pretended to intimacy with the gods, opposed his designs with arguments adapted to the superstitious notions of the people. Olaus himself informed Anscarius, that it must be decided by lot, whether he should be permitted to preach Christianity in Sweden. The missionary prayed, and the lot decided in favour of his designs. The profession of the Gospel was established at Birca, and Christianity made a great progress in Sweden. Anscarius returned into Denmark, and laboured there with success. The missionaries, whom he employed, were directed by him to follow the example of St. Paul, by labouring with their own hands for bread; a very necessary practice in those poor countries.

In the year 865, this Apostle of the north was called to his rest. He had lived six years after the union of the dioceses of Hamburg and Bremen, and had applied himself to the duties of his office, both as a governor and a preacher of the Church, with indefatigable assiduity. A terror to the proud, and a comfort to the humble, he knew how to divide the word of truth, and to give to each of the flock his portion in due season. In all good works, and particularly in his care of redeeming captives, he was eminently distinguished. He erected an hospital at Bremen, in which passengers were relieved, and the sick were taken care of, which, in that

rude age, was an uncommon instance of liberality and compassion. His example and authority had great influence even among those, who sold captives to pagans, or kept them in slavery. They were induced by his exhortations to set the prisoners at liberty. He is said to have had the gift of miracles; and, though I cannot give full credit to the most plausible stories of this nature, which are related of him, because of the superstitious credulity and fraudulent inventions of the times, I must confess with Fleury, that if ever the gift of miracles may be supposed to have existed after the first ages of Christianity, it may be believed, most probably, to have been vouchsafed to those, who were concerned in the first plantation of Churches. And it should be remembered, that Sweden and Denmark, were, under God, indebted to Anscarius, for the first light of the Gospel. This extraordinary person, however, was by no means disposed to value himself on miraculous powers; as he appears to have been acquainted with an holy influence of a more excellent nature, 1 Cor. chap. xii. last verse. "If I had found favour with God," said he, one day, when he heard his miracles extolled, "I should beseech him to grant me one single miracle, even his grace to sanctify my nature." It is remarked of him, that he never did any thing without recommending himself first to God by prayer. A short fragment of an epistle to the bishops, is the whole of his writings, which I can find to be extant. "I beg your earnest prayers to God for the growth and fruitfulness of this mission among the pagans. For, by the grace of God, the Church of Christ is now founded both in Denmark and Sweden; and the pastors discharge their office without molestation. May God Almighty make you all partakers of this work in godly charity, and joint heirs with Christ in heavenly glory!" The Centuriators have charged him with idolatry; but the only proof, which they give, is his superstitious attachment to relics: an evil so general, I had almost said UNIVERSAL, at that time, that it cannot fix any particular blot on the character of Anscarius. I see no proof of his having practised or encouraged image-worship. It is true, that he was devoted to the See of Rome. And, in those days, how few were not so! The Centuriators in their own attachment to the prejudices of the age, in which they lived, might have found a chari-

† Nelson is of the same opinion. "Q. Does it seem probable, that if the conversion of infidels were attempted by men of honest and sincere minds, God would extraordinarily countenance such a design? A. 'Tis agreeable to reason to think he would, and in no way contrary to Scripture. For, as the wisdom of God is never found to be prodigal in multiplying the effects of his Almighty power, so it is never wanting to afford all necessary evidences and motives of conversion." Nelson's Festivals, p. 259.

• Crantzius. See Cent. Magd. Cent. IX. p. 524.

table apology for those of the northern Apostles. If candour be not exercised in such circumstances, we shall scarce be able to see, for many ages, even the existence of a Church of Christ. A Luther, firmly and decidedly resisting, and even despising the current maxims of his own age, is a rare phenomenon.

I have the satisfaction to observe, that Mosheim is, in the case of Anscarius, more candid than the Centuriators. He allows, that the labours of that missionary, and in general of the other missionaries in this century, deserve the highest commendations. If it were possible to exhibit a circumstantial account of Anscarius, most probably the justice of Mosheim's encomium on his character, would be ascertained beyond the reach of contradiction. What else but the genuine love of God in Christ, could have furnished the mind with such faith in Providence, perseverance in hardships, and active charity for souls?

Rembert, his confidant, was appointed bishop of Bremen, by the dying words of the Apostle. He wrote the life of his predecessor, a treatise which seems to have furnished historians with the greatest part of their materials concerning Anscarius. Rembert himself presided over the Church of the north, for twenty-three years, and established their discipline and ecclesiastical constancy. He was not unworthy of the confidence of his predecessor, and lived and died an example of piety. He began to preach among the people of Brandenburg, which hitherto had been altogether pagan, and made some progress towards their conversion. He died in 848.

Jeron, an English presbyter, went over to Holland, in this century, and preached the Gospel there: and, so far as appears, with faithfulness. He was crowned with martyrdom about the year 849.*

Patto, a Scotch abbot, was appointed bishop of Verden, by Charlemagne. The Centuriators only tell us, that he strenuously supported popish corruptions and human traditions. But Cranzius, from whom they collected this account, would have informed them also of better things.† Patto, it appears, had great success among the infidels, but was grieved to see Christian professors disgracing the faith by their vices. He faithfully rebuked them; and for his honest zeal in preaching against the sins of nominal Christians, was murdered about the year 815.

Tanes, who had succeeded Patto in the Scotch abbey, after a time left his situation, and followed his countryman into Germany, not so much with a desire of martyrdom, say the Centuriators, as of obtaining a richer benefice. Uncharitable surmise! There is too much of this leaven to be found in a work, which, in other respects, abounds in piety and industry. The same Cranzius informs us, that Tanes, in fact, laboured in conjunction with Patto, and, after a while, was appointed his successor to the See of Verden. Were the sufferings and hardships, which Patto and himself had sustained among barbarians, likely to render the bishopric of Verden an enviable object of ambition?

I know no other ground on which the propagation of the Gospel may be discovered in this century. The accounts of the labours of Spanish pastors among the Mahometans, or of the sufferings of the Christians under the persecutions of the Moors, are not sufficiently authenticated.

The reader, I hope, has seen, in this dark century, a clear demonstration, that the Church of Christ still existed. He may now, if he please, descend with me, to the ultimate point of Christian depression.

CENTURY X.

CHAPTER I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE famous synodist of the Roman Church, whose partiality to the See of Rome is notorious, has, however, the candour to own, that this was an iron age, barren of all goodness; a leaden age, abounding in all wicked-

ness; and a dark age, remarkable above all others for the scarcity of writers, and men of learning.‡ “Christ was then, as it appears, in a very deep sleep, when the ship was covered with waves; and what seemed worse, when the Lord was thus asleep, there were no disciples, who, by their cries, might awaken him, being themselves all fast asleep.” Under an allusion by no means incongruous with the oriental and scriptural taste, this

* Const. Magd.

† See A. Butler, Vol. II.

‡ Baron. Annals.

writer represents the Divine Head of the Church as having given up the Church, for its wickedness, to a judicial impenitency, which continued the longer, because there were scarce any zealous spirits, who had the charity to pray for the cause of God upon earth. I give this serious and devotional sense to Baronius, because the words will bear it, without the least violence, and the phraseology is perfectly scriptural.*

Infidel malice has with pleasure recorded the vices and the crimes of the popes of this century. Nor is it my intention to attempt to palliate the account of their wickedness. It was as deep and as atrocious as language can paint; nor can a reasonable man desire more authentic evidence of history, than that, which the records both of civil and ecclesiastical history afford, concerning the corruption of the whole Church. One pleasing circumstance, however, occurs to the mind of a genuine Christian; which is, that all this was predicted. The Book of the Revelation may justly be called a prophetic history of these transactions, and the truth of Scripture is vindicated by events of all others the most disagreeable to a pious mind.

What materials then appear for the history of the real Church? The propagation of the Gospel among the pagan nations, and the review of some writers of this century, form the principal materials, and shall be the subjects of two distinct chapters. But the general description of the situation of the Church, can be little else than a very succinct enumeration of the means made use of to oppose the progress of popery.

The decrees of the council of Frankfort against image-worship, had still some influence in Germany, France, and England. In the year 909, a council was held at Trosle, a village near Soissons in France, in which they expressed their sentiments of Christian faith and practice, without any mixture of doctrine that was peculiarly popish. Many churches still had the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. The monks took much pains in our island, to erect an independent dominion on the ruin of the secular clergy. This scheme, equally destructive of civil and clerical authority, met, however, with a vigorous, and, in a great measure, a successful resistance; and the celibacy of the clergy was strongly opposed. The doctrine of transubstantiation itself, the favourite child of Paschasius Radbert, was still denied by many, and could not as yet gain a firm and legal establishment in Europe. Alfric, in England, whose homily for Easter used to be read in the Churches, undertook to prove, that the elements were the body and blood of Christ, not corporally, but spiritually. In an epistle, he asserts, that this sacrifice is not made

his body, in which he suffered for us, nor his blood, which he shed for us, but is spiritually made his body and blood, as was the case with the manna which rained from heaven, and with the water which flowed from the rock. Opposition was also made by kings and councils to the authority of the pope. One of the most remarkable instances of this kind took place in the council of Rheims, which deposed a bishop without the consent of the pope. The story is tedious and uninteresting. I have looked over the acts of the synod, which are circumstantially detailed by the Centuriators in their history of this century; and a few words of the discourses of Arnulph, bishop of Orleans, the president, may deserve to be distinctly quoted.^b "O deplorable Rome, who in the days of our forefathers producedst so many burning and shining lights, thou hast brought forth, in our times, only dismal darkness, worthy of the detestation of posterity: What shall we do, or what counsel shall we take? The Gospel tells us of a barren fig-tree, and of the divine patience exercised toward it. Let us bear with our primates as long as we can; and, in the mean time, seek for spiritual food, where it is to be found. Certainly there are some in this holy assembly, who can testify, that, in Belgium and Germany, both which are near us, there may be found real pastors and eminent men in religion. Far better would it be, if the animosities of kings did not prevent, that we should seek, in those parts, for the judgment of bishops, than in that venal city, which weighs all decrees by the quantity of money. — What think you, reverend fathers, of this man, the pope, placed on a lofty throne, shining in purple and gold? whom do you account him? If destitute of love, and puffed up with the pride of knowledge only, he is Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God."^c

It is always a pleasing speculation to a thinking mind, to observe the ebullitions of good sense and a vigorous understanding, exerted even in disadvantageous circumstances: It should be still more pleasing to observe them, when they are under the conduct of humble piety, as it may be presumed was the case in this instance of Arnulphus. We see here even Luther and Cranmer in embryo. The zealous and intelligent Frenchman laments, that the kings of the earth were committing fornication with the Roman harlot, and giving their power to support her grandeur. He casts his eyes toward the Netherlands and Germany, which appear to have

* As for instance, Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? Ps. xlv.

^b Bishop Newton, in his 3d Vol. p. 161, on the prophecies, of whom I have made some use in a few foregoing sentences, assigns the words to Oestert, of Rheims. The acts of the synod which I have mentioned, shew his mistake: they expressly ascribe them to Arnulphus.

^c 2 Thess. ii.

had, at that time, a degree of light and purity unknown at Rome: he eagerly wishes to oppose this light and purity to the darkness and the profligacy of Rome. Like Luther, he is fearful of throwing all things into confusion by hasty and precipitate methods: and, like Cranmer, in the case of Henry VIII.'s divorce, he wishes to appeal to the unprejudiced judgment of men more learned, and more virtuous, than any to be found at Rome, against the scandalous oppressions of that venal city. That which Arnulphus conceived so judiciously, in an age the most unfavourable to reformation, Luther in Germany, and Cranmer in England, afterward effected. It is not, however, to be supposed, that even those magnanimous struggles for Christian light and liberty were in vain. The Spirit of God was evidently still with the recent churches of Germany and the north; and France itself was by no means destitute of men, who feared God, and served him in the Gospel of his Son.

There is an ultimate point of depression in morals, below which the common sense of mankind and the interests of society will not permit the scandalous profligacy of governors, whether secular or ecclesiastic, to descend. The Church of Rome had sunk to this point in the present century. Not only moral virtue itself, but even the appearance of it, was lost in the metropolis: and the Church, now trampled on by the most worthless prelates, and immersed in profaneness, sensuality, and lewdness, called for the healing aid of the civil magistrate. Otho I. emperor of Germany, came to Rome; and, by the united powers of the civil and the military sword, reduced that capital into some degree of order and decorum. He put an end to the irregular and infamous customs of intruding into the popedom, and confirmed to himself and his successors the right of choosing the supreme pontiff in future. The consequence was, that a greater degree of moral decorum began to prevail in the papacy, though matter of fact evinces but too plainly, that religious principle was still as much wanting as ever. The effect of Otho's regulations was, that the popes exchanged the vices of the rake and the debauchee, for those of the ambitious politician and the hypocrite; and gradually recovered, by a prudent conduct, the domineering ascendancy, which had been lost by vicious excesses. But this did not begin to take place till the latter end of the eleventh century. If a very moderate degree of Christian knowledge had obtained, during Otho's time, in the Christian world, the force of St. Peter's dominion at Rome by his successors, would have been at an end. But there arose no Claudius of Turin in this century. The little specimen of the eloquence of Arnulphus, which has been mentioned, was the only effort I can find,

which was made to stem the torrent of Roman tyranny. The whole western world, with Otho at its head, an emperor of upright intentions, and of shining endowments, agreed to reverence that See as supreme, which had laboured, as it were, by the most infamous practices, to degrade itself, and to convince mankind, that it could not possibly be of divine appointment. The popes were rebuked, condemned, and punished; but the popedom was revered as much as ever God had put in the hearts of princes to fulfil his will; and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.^d The Roman prelates, convinced of the necessity of more caution and decorum in the use of their power, recovered by political artifice what they had lost, and became, in the issue, more terrible and more pernicious in the exercise of their power than ever. The neglect of so favourable an opportunity for emancipating the Church from religious slavery, is the highest proof of the extreme ignorance of these times, and deserved to be noticed.

This was an age of great political regulations. The choice of the German emperor was restricted to certain electors, with whom it continues to the present time. The empire had, indeed, been entirely separated from the French monarchy, in the latter end of the foregoing century. But, in this, the great Otho more firmly fixed the imperial crown, in the name and nation of Germany. He himself was sprung from the dukes of Saxony; and deserved much of all Europe for his memorable victory over the Turks, by which the same restraint was laid on their inroads into Germany, as had been laid in France on the inroads of the Saracens into that kingdom, by the victorious arms of Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne. The Turks were a fierce and valiant nation, who inhabited the coast of the Caspian Sea, and who were let loose on mankind as a just providential scourge, on account of the contempt of divine truth, and the overflowing torrent of iniquity, which had pervaded Christendom. They gradually superseded the Saracens, and seized their power and empire; but no great alteration took place in the civil situation of the east or the west on that account. For the Turks universally embraced Mahometanism, the religion of the vanquished; and with that the hatred of the Saracens to the Christian name; nor have they to this day acquired either politeness or science to such a degree, as might mitigate their ferocity.

In all this disastrous period, I find scarce any prince, except Otho, actuated with a spirit of religious zeal: indeed, his two successors of the same name, inherited some

portion of his talents and virtues. The efforts of Otho, to purify the Church, to promote learning, to erect bishoprics, to endow churches, and to propagate the Gospel among the barbarous nations, were highly laudable. And so steady and sincere were his exertions of this nature, and so amiable was his private life, that I cannot but hope that he was himself a real Christian. His empress, Adalathe, was no less remarkable for her zeal and liberality. But I scarce need to say, that the reigning ignorance, superstition, and wickedness defeated, or abused their well-meant designs; those alone excepted, which regarded the propagation of the Gospel among the pagans.

In the west the Normans, in the east the Turks, committed the most dreadful outrages on the Church. In our own island I find nothing, in all this period, but ignorance, superstition, and the ravages of northern barbarians. The state of France was not much different: the latter kings of the house of Charlemagne were dwindled into cyphers; and, towards the close of the century, the third race of French kings began in the person of Hugh Capet. This prince was himself by no means so renowned as Clovis and Charlemagne, the heads of the first and second race; but his posterity remained on the throne for a much longer series of years than that of the two former, though the name of Capet was almost forgotten in the world. It has, however, been rendered familiar to our ears of late, by a series of transactions, which have issued in the ruin of that house, and in the exhibition of scenes, which have equally outraged every principle of religion, honour, and humanity.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

THE Hungarians had received some ideas of Christianity in the time of Charlemagne. But on his decease, they relapsed into the idolatries of their fathers, and the Christian name was almost extinguished among them. Nor is it probable, that they had ever been much instructed in the real Gospel of Christ. But toward the middle of this century, two Hungarian chiefs, whose governments lay on the banks of the Danube, made profession of Christianity; and were baptized at Constantinople. These two leaders were called Bologudes and Gyza. The former soon apostatized: the latter persevered; received instruction from Hierotheus, a bishop, who had accompanied him from Constantinople; and encouraged the labours of the same bishop among his subjects. The effects pro-

duced salutary to the Hungarian nation: Saita, the daughter of Gyza, was given in marriage to Geysa, the chief prince of Hungary. She prevailed on her husband to receive Christianity, and the Gospel was once more introduced into a country through the pious piety of a woman. Geysa, however, still retained much inclination to the idolatry of his fathers, though his conversations with Christian captives and missionaries made a strong impression on his mind; but he was prevented from apostatizing, by the zeal and authority of Adalbert, archbishop of Prague, who visited Hungary toward the conclusion of this century. Whether the king's conversion was real or nominal, the most salutary consequences attended the reception of the Gospel by his subjects. Humanity, peace, and civilization began to flourish among a people hitherto fierce and barbarous in the extreme. Stephen, the son of Geysa, was baptized by Adalbert; and became a more decisive defender of the faith than his father had been. Under Stephen, Hungary was almost wholly evangelized; and nothing was omitted by this zealous prince to establish Christianity throughout his dominions. There is every reason to believe that many real conversions took place, though I can give no particular account of them.

But Adalbert has been mentioned; and it will be proper to give the reader a short sketch of the life of that extraordinary personage.* He was born in 956, and ordained by Diethmar, archbishop of Prague. He beheld this same archbishop dying in terrible agonies of conscience, on account of his neglect of pastoral duty, and secular avices. Adalbert was appointed his successor; but with so little satisfaction to himself, that he was never seen to smile afterwards. Being asked the reason, he said, "it is an easy thing to wear a mitre and a cross, but an awful thing to give an account of a bishopric, before the Judge of quick and dead." Bohemia, the scene of his diocese, was covered with idolatry: there were Christians, indeed, in that country, but chiefly nominal ones. In vain did the pious archbishop endeavour to reform the evils and abuses. The people undesignedly gave the noblest testimony to his sincerity, when they observed, that it was impossible for him and them to have communion with each other, because of the perfect opposition of life and conversation. Adalbert, sighing over the wretched objects of his charge; and, still willing to labour in the best of causes, travelled as a missionary into Poland, and planted the Gospel in Dantzic. Here his labours seem to have been crowned with good success: in visiting a small island, he was knocked down with the oar of a boat: however, recovering him-

* Alban Butler's Saints' Lives, Vol. IV.

self, he made his escape, rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, and with his fellow-labourers quit the place: indeed he was forced to flee for his life; and, at length, was murdered by barbarians in Lithuania; or, as some think, in Prussia, about the year 937. Siggo, a pagan priest, was the principal instrument of his death. He is commonly styled the apostle of Prussia, though he only evangelized the city of Dantzig, which is in the neighbourhood of that country. Such was Adalbert;—and so small is the account transmitted to us, of one of the wisest and best of men, whom God had raised up for the instruction of the species;—a man willing to labour and to suffer for Christ!

Wolfgang, bishop of Ratisbon, may properly accompany Adalbert, who had received his bishopric of Prague, in consequence of Wolfgang's having vacated part of his diocese for that purpose. The latter was a native of Sambia, and was brought up at a school in Wurtzburg. His experience gave him an opportunity of seeing, that professors of wisdom may even be greater slaves to pride and envy than the illiterate. Wearied with the view of scholastic strifes, he sighed for solitude, but was engaged to attend Henry, his friend, to Trier, where the latter was chosen archbishop. Wolfgang there taught children, and was dean of a community of ecclesiastics. In 972, he went to preach in Hungary, but had no great success. He was afterwards appointed bishop of Ratisbon: there he reformed the clergy, and was indefatigable in preaching twenty-two years. Henry, duke of Bavaria, placed under him his four children, Henry, afterwards emperor, Gisela, queen of Hungary, Bruno, bishop of Augsburg, and Brigit, abbess of Ratisbon, all eminent characters. Wolfgang died in 994. See Butler, Vol. X.

The plantation of the Gospel in Brandenburg was begun by the zeal and victorious arms of Charlemagne; but was not completed, in a national sense, till the year 928, under Henry the Fowler, the predecessor of Otto I.*

The labours of Gerard, bishop of Toul in Germany, will also deserve to be mentioned. He was himself an eminent preacher; and often commissioned zealous pastors to preach in country parishes. He cultivated learning among his disciples; but at the same time took care, so far as it lay in his power, that they should apply themselves to devotion. That he would be very earnest in these pious efforts, will admit of no doubt, if it be true, that he declared, that he found more delight in heavenly exercises during one moment, than a worldly soul finds in worldly

pleasures for a thousand years. Alban Butler, Vol. IV.

If we look into Scandinavia, we find that the work of God, which had begun so prosperously in the last century, by the labours of Anscarius, had met with a severe check in Denmark, whose king, Gormo the 3d.^d laboured to extirpate the Gospel there entirely. His queen Tyra, however, openly professed it, and gave it all the support which she was enabled to do, under great disadvantages. But the power and influence of the king prevailed, and most of his subjects returned to idolatry. At length, Henry I. called the Fowler, the predecessor of the great Otto, led an army into Denmark; and, through the terror of his arms, obliged Gormo to promise submission to the commands of the emperor. Under the protection of this last prince, Unni, then archbishop of Hamburg, with some faithful labourers, came into Denmark, and brought over many to the profession of divine truth; but Gormo himself remained inflexible. Harald, the son of Gormo, however, received the word with respect: for the instructions of his mother, Tyra, had, at least, removed all prejudice from his mind. Unni, with the consent of Gormo, visited the islands, and formed Christian churches among them. The king himself was allowed by his conqueror Henry, to choose, whether he would receive Christianity himself, or not; but was prohibited from persecuting the faith, in his dominions: and thus, by a singular concurrence of circumstances, a sovereign prince was, by a foreign power, prevented from committing that evil among his subjects, to which his own inclinations would have led him. I cannot vindicate the impetuous proceedings of Henry: the labours of Unni were, however, highly laudable, and Providence smiled on his benevolent views in propagating truth and holiness.

Unni, animated with success, determined to follow the pattern of Anscarius, and to visit the kingdom of Sweden. He entered the Baltic, and arrived at Birca: there he found that the Gospel had been extinct: for seventy years, no bishop had appeared among them; except Rembert, the successor of Anscarius. There probably were, however, some souls then alive, who had heard the Gospel with joy in former times; and it pleased God, to give large success to the ministry of Unni. He fixed the Gospel in Sweden, and planted it even in the remoter parts of that northern region. And, at length, he finished his glorious course at Birca, in the year 936. The savage disposition of the princes, and the confusion of the times had tended to obliterate the traces of Anscarius's labours: but, at length, Eric,

* Mosheim, Cent. XI. Chap. I.

† Memoirs of the house of Brandenburg, by the late king of Prussia.

† Centuriat. Cent. X. Mosheim, Cent. X. C. 1.

the eighth king. of Sweden, and still more, his son and successor, Olaus the second, favoured the propagation of the Gospel.

The former of these princes requested the archbishop of Bremen to supply his kingdom with missionaries. The archbishop sent him two persons of knowledge, piety, and integrity, Adalvard and Stephen. They laboured with much success for a time; but the natural enmity of depraved mankind will exert itself against true piety, whatever be the form of government under which men live. The nobles of Sweden were enraged to find their licentiousness of manners so restrained: and they commenced a religious persecution against both the missionaries and the king. The former were beaten with rods, and expelled from Uppeal; the latter was murdered on account of his piety. His son and successor Olaus was not discouraged from cherishing Christianity; and his zeal and piety were crowned with success. Cent. Magd. Cent. X.

Thus were Sweden and Denmark, after a variety of changes, reduced into subjection to the form, and, no doubt, many individuals to the power of the Gospel. In the latter country, after the death of Henry I. the inhabitants refused to pay tribute to Otho the Great, his successor. This monarch obliged them to submit, and required Harald, the son and successor of Gormo, to receive Christian baptism. All that we know of this prince, inclines me to believe, that there was no reluctance on his part. He was baptized, together with his wife and little son, whose name had been Sueno; and, in honour of the emperor, he was now called Suen-Otho. Harald, during his whole life, took every wise and salutary method to propagate divine truth among his subjects, and to restrain vice and immorality. Nor is it much to be doubted, that he would instruct his son Suen-Otho to act in the same manner; and labour to impress on his mind the power of that divine religion, which he himself seems to have felt. Be that as it may, Suen-Otho formed a junction with the chiefs of the country, who were offended at the pious zeal of Harald: in consequence of which, the latter was murdered: and Suen-Otho, renouncing even the name, which had been imposed on him, persecuted the Christians with great cruelty; and, for a time, gave a predominancy to the pagan interest in his dominions. It is remarkable, however, that, like another Manasseh, in his affliction he knew that the Lord was God. Being expelled from his throne, and forced to live in exile among the Scots, he was induced to remember the lessons of his childhood: he repented of his crimes; and, being restored to his throne, like the same Manasseh he laboured to destroy the idolatry, which he had supported, and, in the

latter part of his life, trod in the steps of his father.

In this century, the light of the Gospel penetrated into Norway. About the year 912, an English missionary, named Bernard, attempted to plant the doctrine of Christ in this barbarous region. Olaus, the king, listened to his discourses, and professed himself to be a convert; but he still attended to omens and Gentile superstitions. All the arguments of Bernard were ineffectual, to cure him of his inveterate propensities: whence, he was more a disgrace than an ornament to his profession. About the year 933, another king, called Hagen, who had been educated among the English, employed certain missionaries of that nation, to instruct his subjects. But the Norwegians persisted in their idolatry; and his successor Granfeldt pursued the same plan, but without effect. Several successive princes laboured in the same cause, with the same ill success. The form of a government established in any country, from experience seems to have been of no capital moment, in regard to the success of Christian missions. Despotism, limited monarchy, and republicanism, have each been serviceable or detrimental in the cause; and to associate strongly any one of these forms with the progress of the Gospel, is, perhaps, forming an imagination of an alliance between Church and state, that has no solid foundation in nature. We see, in the case before us, that a republican form would have proved destructive to the best of causes. It is to the effusion of the Holy Spirit, directing subordinate causes, and, independently of mere human politics, that the success of the Gospel is ever to be ascribed. At length, Haco, king of Norway, being driven from his throne, on account of his tyrannical government, having himself also persecuted the Christians in Norway, and having put himself into the protection of that same Harald of Denmark, whom we have already celebrated, became a patron of Christianity among his people. For Harald both instructed him in the nature of Christianity, and restored him to his dominions. Haco, humbled and enlightened, recommended the Gospel in an assembly of the people, in the year 945. His zeal and solemnity were very striking; but the fierce and barbarous people were not much moved; and the remembrance of his former ill conduct would naturally prejudice their minds against his arguments. Olaus, who reigned some time after, was the most successful of all the Norwegian princes in recommending Christianity. At length, Swein, king of Denmark, having made himself master of Norway, obliged his subjects universally to renounce their gods, and profess the Gospel. Doubtless many

compulsory methods were used by several, probably by all these princes, by no means agreeable to the genius of the Gospel. Their intentions, however, seem laudable; and at least the zealous labours of the missionaries deserve to be noticed. Among these, Guth-cheld, an English pastor, was most eminent. The idol Thor was dragged from its place, and publicly burnt in the sight of worshippers. In fact, Norway became Christian, in the form of its religion, throughout. The Orkney Islands, then subject to the Norwegian crown, received the light of the Gospel, which, in some degree, penetrated also into Iceland and Greenland; and, in this century, the triumph of Christianity was complete throughout all Scandinavia.

The labours of Adelbert, the first archbishop of Magdeburg, will deserve to be mentioned in this place. The Rugi, about the year 960, intreated the emperor Otho I. to send them a Christian bishop. This people lived in Pomerania, between the Oder and the Wipper, and in the isle of Rugen in the Baltic. The town of Rugenwald still bears their name. They were a remarkably savage race, and had a famous temple in Rugen. Certain monks of the mission-seminary of new Corbie, had formerly laboured with success, in various provinces of the Slavi or Slavonians, and in the whole isle of Rugen, the Rugi being a tribe of the Slavi. An oratory was erected in the isle, in honour of Christ, and in memory of St. Vitus, patron of new Corbie. But the savage people soon relapsed; and making Vitus the chief of their gods, erected to him a temple and idol with sacrifices, permitting no merchant to buy or sell there, who did not first give some offering for their sacrifices, or for the temple of their god, whom they now called Swantewith. "Thus," says Helmodus, "the man, whom we confess a martyr and servant of Christ, they adore as god, a creature for the Creator; nor is there any nation, who so much abhors Christians, especially pastors." A memorable caution for teachers, to beware, lest their instructions of the heathen may only lead them from one species of idolatry to another. However, at their desire, Otho I. sent Adelbert to the isle. But the people were hardened: several of his fellow-preachers were murdered, but he himself escaped. This fruitless mission was in 961. Adelbert was afterwards, in 970, appointed archbishop of Magdeburg, where Adelaide the empress, and widow of Otho I. passed the greatest part of her time, and gave herself up very much to his directions: she had gone through a great variety of prosperity and adversity, and was very pious and exemplary. Adelbert was an instrument of converting great numbers of the Slavi: he supplied his diocese with able pastors for the new converts, and died in 982, having very laudably ruled

the Church for twelve years. See Butler, Vol. XII.

In the preceding century, Rollo, a Norwegian pirate, at the head of a valiant and lawless band of soldiers, who are commonly called Normans, invaded and ravaged France. But in the year 912, Charles the Simple, a monarch ill-calculated to withstand so powerful an enemy, purchased a peace, by investing Rollo with the dukedom of Normandy, and by giving him his daughter Gisela in marriage, on condition that he should embrace Christianity. All religions were equally indifferent to Rollo and his followers: they, therefore, professed the Gospel without the least hesitation. It seemed proper to notice this event, as introducing the famous line of Norman dukes into France, whose history, in process of time, involves so much both of French and English history. As for the rest, I know of no evidence of an effusion of the Divine Spirit, which attended their reception of Christianity. The Normans, however, became gradually better members of Society; and, at length, began to patronize, in some form or other, something that bore the appearance of more serious religion.

While the nations, who had long enjoyed the forms of true religion, were slumbering in superstitions, or wallowing in gross wickedness, the Head of the Church, in his providence, still reserved to himself a GODLY SEED; and, by their labours, extended the pale of the Gospel. Poland had hitherto remained in the thickest night of ignorance, and both an inland situation and a barbarous neighbourhood seemed to exclude it from the light of divine truth. Some Poles, however, travelling into Bohemia¹ and Moravia, on account of business, were struck with what they heard concerning Christianity: they listened to the ministry of the word of God, and received it gladly. Returning home, they every where recommended to their countrymen the grace of the Gospel. Moreover, foreigners often visiting Poland, on account of trade, preached Christ, as they were able, to the Poles. Something divinely excellent appeared to be in Christianity; and the happy infection spread from heart to heart. It reached, at length, Micislaus, the king or duke of Poland; who divorced his seven wives, with whom he had cohabited, and married Dambrouca, the daughter of Boleslaus, the duke of Bohemia. He was baptized in the year 965; and, by the pious and charitable instructions of his new spouse, was induced to exert his authority in the propagation of the Gospel through his dominions: in fine, Poland became a Christian nation; nor is it probable that this was no more than an external profession: that it

was so in some instances, there is no doubt; but, nevertheless, the circumstances of the narrative carry the appearance of something truly divine. Nor is that true, which Mosheim¹ asserts, that an inward change of affections and principles, was far from being an object of attention in this barbarous age. It seems most probable, that it was an object of attention in the missionaries, and in those, who zealously received them. We have seen, in several instances, an evidence of zeal in preaching, and a constancy in suffering, which can scarce be explained on any other principle than that of godly sincerity. And we have lived to see a refined age as indifferent concerning an inward change, as any barbarous period whatever.

In the year 955, Olga, the queen of Russia, sailed from Kiow to Constantinople, and received baptism, together with her attendants. On her return, she persevered in the Christian religion, but could not prevail on her family and subjects, to receive the same: the Greek missionaries, however, laboured still, and gradually succeeded². At length, Wolodomir, her grandson, in the year 961, married Anna, sister of the emperor Basil, who, by her zealous importunity, prevailed on her spouse to receive Christianity. He was baptized in the year 987; and, from that time, Russia received a Christian establishment, and has ever since considered herself as a daughter of the Greek Church.

Urie, son of count Huebald, born in 993, was placed at Augsbourg under the care of Adalbrun, bishop of that city. He was made, at length, bishop of Augsbourg, by the emperor, Henry the Fowler. He comforted his people, who had been plundered by the Hungarians: he avoided the court: he kept close to his flock, and was equally renowned for devotion, and for pastoral labours. He died about 973.

Thus, in an age of proverbial darkness, that illustrious prophecy continued to receive its accomplishment; "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." The regular and civilized governments in the world sustained such dreadful calamities from the irruption of pagan nations, on all sides, that their encouragement of Christian missions was equally humane and prudential. The precepts of the Gospel were found alone effectual to meliorate the dispositions of barbarians; and, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, no doubt, this was the happy effect on the minds of many.—But, it will still be said, "the conversion of a great number was only nominal, and compulsory methods were employed, which are by no means adapted to the genius of the Gospel." It must be allowed, that the latter of these

assertions is strictly true, and the former, in many instances, but by no means in all. The efforts of the tenth and the three preceding centuries, to extend Christianity, had their blessings, which have been manifestly insisted on, and even exaggerated by modern writers. Defective, however, as these efforts were, they form the principal story of those times; and partly, by evident proof, and a detail of circumstances, and partly by analogy and the nature of things, they appear to have been attended with the effusion of the Divine Spirit, the genuine conversion of numbers, and the improvement of human society. The virtues, of many at least, of the missionaries are above any encomium, which I can give; though they were born in rude ages, and are consigned to contempt and oblivion by polite historians, who lavish all their praises on heroes and politicians. If, however, the labours of an obscure individual may attract the attention of the public, the names of Boniface, Anastasius, Adalbert, Unni, and others of the same class, shall be honoured among men, and the work of propagating the Gospel shall appear laudable in an extreme degree. It must appear so to all, who desire that the name of Jesus should be honoured through the earth; and that the power of his grace should be felt in every place, and in every heart. But to what lengths will not scepticism proceed? It has even been advanced, that the attempt to propagate Christianity, without the consent of the government established in every country, is unlawful in its nature. A position so injurious to the character of many of the best and wisest men, whom it behoves us to celebrate in this history; and so conveniently favourable to the selfish, avaricious, indolent spirit of nominal Christians, will deserve to be investigated and exposed in its genuine colours.

CHAPTER III.

AN APOLOGY FOR CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

THE commission, which our Saviour gave to his Apostles, a little before his ascension, forms of itself the strongest apology for the practice of Christian missionaries in all ages. "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."³

It may not be said, that this commission of evangelizing all nations is restricted to the Apostles; because He, who gave them di-

¹ Chap. I. Cent. X. ² Gibbon, Vol. V.

³ Isaiah xlix.

³ Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

rections, declares, He will always be with those, who obey them, to the end of the world. The commission is then as much in force at this day, as it was in the first age of Christianity; and will continue in force, till time shall be no more. The promise of divine support, to encourage the missionaries in the prosecution of a work so arduous and so difficult, extends to all ages, and would be perfectly inapplicable to those ages, if any such there were, which should have no right to propagate the Gospel.

"Is every person then, calling himself a Christian, authorized to preach the Gospel among the heathen nations?" Not so: nor is every person called a Christian authorized to preach in Christian countries. Certain qualifications and endowments, and, above all, the real and genuine influence of the Holy Spirit, are necessary for this purpose. To define and to ascertain these in particular cases, enter not into the subject before us. Suffice it to say, that, however, in point of prudence and expediency, it be proper to procure, if practicable, the consent and concurrence of the government of the country, which is the object of the mission, such consent and concurrence is not necessary as a legitimate qualification of a missionary, who should undertake to evangelize pagan countries. Our Lord well knew, that such consent was not attainable at the time in which He gave this commission, in any country under heaven. He mentions no such condition; nor did the Apostles conceive the necessity of such a license. It is well known, on the contrary, that they persisted in their mission, not only without, but also against the express prohibitions of all governments, whether Jewish or Gentile. The nature and reasonableness of Christianity itself is such, that, wherever it is fairly exhibited, in connection with its proper proofs and evidences, those, who hear it, are bound in conscience to obey it, magistrates as well as others; and, as we have seen, the magistrate himself not only may, but ought to promote it, for the good of society."

"But the Apostles wrought miracles; and therefore, though they had a right to propagate Christianity, others who do not so, have no right to preach, except with the consent of the government." It does not appear, that the evidence of their commission rested wholly on miracles, though it must be confessed these formed a striking part of it, and were afforded by Divine Providence, in order to facilitate the progress of the then infant-religion. But if, what no serious Christian will deny, there is an internal evidence in the Gospel itself, which ought to weigh with every reasonable mind, abstracted from any thing miraculous, it will be the duty of

every one to receive it, when fairly proposed; and the obedience due to divine revelation is binding not only on those who hear it from one, who works miracles; but also on those who hear it from one, who brings unexceptionable testimonies of miracles having been wrought by others, in attestation of Christianity. Whoever attentively reads the history of the Acts of the Apostles, and the historical parts of the Epistles, will find, that all ministers, regularly ordained,—for the case of self-ordained ministers, I do not here consider,—thought it their duty to preach the word every where, whether they could work miracles or not. The miraculous powers were an adventitious circumstance; of great importance, indeed, in the opening of Christianity; but if the stress of an evangelical commission to the heathen had ever been meant to be laid upon it, it is surprising, that this condition should never be mentioned in the sacred volume: it is not to be conceived, that the numberless missionaries in the apostolic age should all have been ignorant of it. Besides, with the cessation of miracles, the work of promulgation must have probably ceased; whereas, it appears, that in the succeeding centuries, even to the tenth, missionaries still laboured; and, in a greater or less degree, the work prospered in their hand.

If these reflections have any weight, they show that it has been inconsiderately asserted, that civil governments alone have a right to determine, whether Christian missionaries shall preach the Gospel or not within their dominions. I have proved, I think, that they have a right to establish Christianity; but it does not follow, that they have a right to exclude it. Right and wrong, in this case, have a higher foundation than human politics. Trajan might think himself justified in persecuting Christians, because they transgressed the Roman laws, which forbade the introduction of foreign religions. But Trajan ought to have known, that there is an authority in religion, superior to any human constitutions whatever.

Though the authority of Scripture, the practice of the apostolic age, and the labours of the best and wisest of their successors; from age to age, seem, taken together, to form a sufficient apology for Christian missions at this day, yet we need not fear, in this cause, to appeal to the common sense of mankind. If a whole nation were afflicted with a pestilential disease, and a foreigner were in possession of a medicine, that might probably save many of their lives, it might be prudent, no doubt, for that foreigner to obtain an express license, if practicable, from the government, for affording medical aid to its subjects. But will any man say, that it would be wrong in him to endeavour to heal the diseased, if he had an opportu-

nity, and had the benevolence to attempt it, though he had no formal sanction from the magistrate? To promote the welfare of our neighbours, is, next to our duty to God, the most essential ingredient in the character of a good man. Is the express consent of the legislature necessary, antecedently to every office of mercy and humanity?—It is not necessary to say, that the propagation of the Gospel is the most salutary and the most important of all works of charity: what then ought to be thought of an objection to it, which leaves to the mercy of the magistrate the great office of labouring to win souls; and would charge with sin an employment of all others the most beneficial to mankind?

“Is not this to teach rebellion against lawful authority, and to countenance an undue interference with foreign governments?” Could this be proved, I should not know how to apologize for missionaries. For I scarce know any thing more diametrically opposite to the genius of the Gospel than such a conduct. Let it be carefully observed, that our argument goes no farther than to justify a *PACIFIC* attempt to teach Christianity throughout the Globe. “If they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another,” is the rule of the Divine Author of Christianity. A missionary must be prepared to endure, not to inflict evil: he may expect opposition, and even death itself. He must patiently sustain his lot: he must forego not only all violence in attempting to propagate Christianity, but also all artifice and secular intrigues: he must not only forbear to disturb the government of the country, and to weaken men’s attachment to it, but he must do more: he must teach obedience to it, as an essential branch of Christianity itself, and an obedience too, “not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” If his word is not received in one place, he must make experiment of another, in dependence on Divine Providence and grace. Meekness, patience, submission to civil authority must attend him in every step. Such were the apostolic missionaries; such in a good degree were the missionaries of the dark ages, which we are reviewing. And I am apt to think, that those, who object to missions in general, have had their eye on the political craft of the jesuits, or the furious factions of enthusiasts. For I can scarce believe we are grown so totally callous to every Christian sensation, as deliberately to condemn all missions conducted in the spirit of the Gospel.

Do we expect that the kingdom of Christ shall spread through all nations, according to numerous prophecies? And are no means to be employed to promote it? Shall we complain of the want of universality in the best religion, and discourage every attempt

to effect that universality? With what an ill grace do objectors to the propagation of the Gospel make such complaints? Are human efforts concerned in all other works of Divine Providence, and are they in this, the most important of all, to be excluded? Are we to sit still, and expect some sudden and miraculous providential interposition, and is this the only instance, in which Socialists and men, who call themselves rational Christians, will use no rational methods, in order to produce the most desirable effects? Or have we learned to despise the importance of Christianity itself, and do we think that the present comfort and future felicity of mankind are no way connected with the subject before us?

I propose these few questions, leaving the resolution of them to the consciences of those, who have had it in their power to encourage Christian missions in our times, and who have opposed them. To have been particularly active in extending the Redeemer’s kingdom, forms no part of the glory of this country. Denmark, a poor impotent government, compared with ours, has, it is well known, effected in this way what may cause Britons to blush, and what should stir us up to virtuous emulation. With every advantage in our hands, for the propagation of the Gospel, we have done very little indeed, and the annals of the several dark ages, we have reviewed, have exhibited a spirit of adventurous charity unknown to those, who now boast themselves as the most enlightened and the most philosophic of mankind.

CHAPTER IV.

WRITERS AND EMINENT MEN IN THE CENTURY.

In a dearth so excessive, there are few, who will deserve to be noticed either for knowledge or piety; and fewer still for both. My chief view, in this chapter, is to give the reader an idea of the state of true religion in these times; nor will the picture here exhibited be materially erroneous, though it could be proved, that Theophylact, one of the authors, whom I shall quote, belonged to the next century, as Mosheim thinks. For the spirit and taste of the tenth and eleventh centuries are so similar, that what illustrates the one, will illustrate the other. The very toleration of the Roman popedom itself, after the detection of its flagitiousness before all the world, evinces the uncommonly low condition of Christian knowledge in this age: proofs, however, will appear, that the Spirit of God had not forsaken the Church, and that there were those, who revered and felt the power of her doctrines.

It is not in Rome, but in the more recent Churches, that this power appears. Whether it was practically exemplified by Bruno, archbishop of Cologne, in Germany, is not very evident. But, in knowledge and learning, he was very eminent. He was brother to Otho I. and, by the desire of the people of Cologne, was fixed by that great prince in the archbishopric.¹ We must not expect much regard to ecclesiastical discipline in these times; and therefore are not to be surprised, that a prince so religious as Otho was, should invest his relation also with the civil power of a dukedom. Bruno is remarked, however, to have been among the first, who united offices so discordant in the same person.² This was to secularize the Church, and Cologne continues in a similar state to this day. Bruno was nevertheless an assiduous promoter of religion.³ Normans, Danes, and various others, who travelled in his province, he brought over to the profession of Christianity. He restrained the luxury both of clergy and people; and was himself a shining example of modest and frugal manners. He died about the year 965.

Unni, a far more decided character, has been already celebrated. As archbishop of Hamburg, he acted with a vigour and a piety worthy the importance of that See. He was highly revered by the German emperors of his time; and that a person so opulent should choose to labour as a missionary in such countries as Denmark and Sweden, argues a zeal of no common degree. He died at Stockholm in 936.⁴

By the advice of Adolvard, bishop of Verden, Adeldagus, who had discharged some petty office in the Church, was sent for to court by the great Otho, and made his chancellor. On the death of Unni, he was appointed archbishop of Hamburg, but was so acceptable, by his talents and industry, to the emperor, that he still continued in the same secular employments. Adeldagus sent a number of pastors into Denmark, and was present with Otho at Rome when the pope-dom was reformed. His flock, however, at Hamburg, complained, and not without reason, of his absence from them. The emperor, at length, gave him liberty to return home. His care of the poor, and many rather princely than pastoral virtues, were remarkable. But I can form no great idea of the spirituality of a man, who neglects residence among his flock, and continues to act in a secular capacity under three successive princes, while he holds a bishopric. He served Otho II. and III. with the same success and ability with which he had done Otho I.; and after he had held his bishopric 53 years, he died under Otho III. in the year 988.⁵

Libentius, an Italian; by the desire of Ad-

eldagus, was appointed his successor. Much is said in praise of this prelate. He often visited the Vandals, a barbarous people in Poland, about the Vistula, and taught them the way of salvation. He sent pastors to distant nations, and was a shining exemplar of piety and beneficence. He died in 1013.⁶

Adolvard, bishop of Verden, who, as we have mentioned, recommended Adeldagus to the patronage of Otho I. was himself an excellent pattern of piety and probity. He discharged the office of a faithful pastor in his diocese, and took pains to instruct the ignorant Vandals in the way of salvation.⁷

Of Adalbert, archbishop of Prague, I can find no more than has been already mentioned; though his labours deserve to have been minutely recorded.

That the true doctrines of the Gospel, and some true knowledge of their experimental use and power, were not lost in the Church altogether, the following quotations will abundantly evince; though of the authors themselves no particular account can be given, nor is it very clear at what exact period of time some of them lived: the passages selected from them will serve, however, to shew the religious taste of the times.

Ansbert, speaking of the effect of the divine Word, observes; "There is no doubt, but by the holy preaching of the Word the faithful receive the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord bearing witness to this, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."⁸

The value of the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit, has been frequently attested in these memoirs, and in a language very similar to the following passage of Smaragdus on the same subject. "Our senses is renewed by the exercises of wisdom, meditation on the word of God, and the understanding of his statutes; and the more proficiency any person daily makes by reading, and the deeper hold the truth has upon his understanding, the more the new man grows day by day.—Let no man attribute to the teacher, that he understands from his mouth; for unless there be an INTERNAL TEACHER, the external one labours in vain. The Jews heard Christ preach in one manner, the Apostles in another; those to judgment, these to salvation: for the Spirit taught these in the heart, what those heard outwardly by the ear.—Unless the Lord shine into the heart of the hearer, the teacher labours in darkness.—For the faith of the nations comes not by the wisdom of the composition, but by the gift of divine vocation."⁹

"If thou wouldst have thy sons obedient to thee," says Theophylact, "instruct them in the divine Word. Say not, that it belongs only to persons professionally religious

¹ Cent. Magd. Cent. X. Vol. III.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cent. Magd. Cent. X. Vol. III.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ John vi. 83. Cent. Magd. Vol. III. p. 18.

⁷ Ibid.

to read the Scriptures. It is the duty of every Christian, particularly of those, who are in the midst of secular employments: they need the greatest help, as they live in a tempest. It is for thy own interest, that thy children be well versed in Scripture; thence they will learn to reverence their parents." Let modern sceptics and infidels attend to the voice of a writer who lived in a dark age of the Church; for he was a luminary of these dark ages. He most probably lived in the eleventh century; and the plain precepts just mentioned deserve, from gentlemen of the eighteenth century, more serious attention than whole volumes of metaphysical subtleties, or political speculations.

Speaking of the state of man after the fall, Theophylact observes: "Some are found, indeed, to be good tempered and benign by nature, none by exercise and meditation. And though some be reckoned good men, they adulterate every action by vain glory. But he, whose goodness centres in his own glory, not in goodness itself, whenever an opportunity offers, will indulge evil lusts. For, if among us Christians, the threatening of hell, every advantage of study, and the lives of innumerable Saints, can scarce preserve men in the practice of virtue, how can the nugatory tales of the Gentiles teach them virtue? it will not be matter of surprise, indeed, if they confirm them in wickedness."¹

With such discrimination of ideas did this writer distinguish between the state of nature and of grace! Let us hear him express his thoughts on the Gospel, as opposed to the law. "The law, if it detect any man sinning, even in a circumstance that may appear trifling, as in gathering sticks on the sabbath day," condemns him to death: but the Holy Spirit, receiving those, who have committed innumerable offences, in the laver of baptismal regeneration justifies them, and quickens those, who are dead in sin.—The righteousness of God preserves us; not our own righteousness: for what righteousness can we have, who are altogether corrupt? But God hath justified us, not by our works, but by faith, which grace ought to grow more and more consummate; as the Apostle said unto the Lord, increase our faith.² Truly it is not enough to have once believed. For, as the benefits of divine grace exceed human thoughts, there is absolute need of faith to conceive and apprehend them.—The righteousness of God is by faith. This needs not our labours and works; but the whole belongs to the grace of God. Moses asserts, that man is justified by works.³ But none are found to fulfil

them. Justification by the law is therefore rendered impossible. This is the righteousness of God, when a man is justified by grace, so that no blemish, no spot is found in him."⁴

"Maxime Teucrorum duxor, quo sceptris ungum
Res equidem Troja vietas aut regna sedebat."

So speaks Evander to Virgil's hero. With great propriety may we say of justification by Christ through faith, the leading doctrine of Christianity, that while its existence is preserved in the Church, the power of Christ's kingdom is not destroyed in the world. There, doubtless, were those in Theophylact's time, who knew how to feed on the doctrine of grace, and convert it into spiritual nourishment. This writer, it should be observed, belonged to the eastern Church, of which we hear very little in the dark ages before us. Serious and humble spirits, therefore, in those regions, were not left without a light shining amidst the tenfold obscurity of the times, by which their feet might be guided in the paths of peace. And as it is not to be supposed, that the light was preserved to no purpose, we may safely conclude, that the real Church was still in existence in the east.

The same intelligent writer gives us an illustration of the abundance of grace, spoken of in Romans v. which will deserve to be mentioned. "Suppose a person is thrown into prison with his wife and children, because he is deep in debt, and then should be not only freed from the prison and the demands of the law, but also receive at once innumerable talents, be introduced into the royal palace, be presented with a kingdom, and accounted worthy of the same, and be reckoned a son of the king;—This is the abundance of grace."⁵

Hear how experimentally he speaks of Christian faith. "Faith is looked on as contemptible, because of the foolishness of preaching.—He, who believes with great affection, extends his heart to God. He is united to him. His heart, inflamed, conceives a strong assurance, that it shall gain its desire. We all know this by experience, because Christ hath said, Whatever ye ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive. He who believes, gives himself wholly to God, he speaks to him with tears; and in prayer holds the Lord, as it were, by the feet. O rich advantage, exceeding human thought, that every one who believes on him, gains two things, one, that he does not perish, the other, that he has eternal life.—The faith of Christ is an holy work, and sanctifies its possessor. It is a guide to every good work: for works without faith are dead, and so is

¹ Cent. Magd. Vol. III. p. 64.

² Numbers xv. 32, &c.

³ Luke xvi. 5.

⁴ He appears to mean the same thing with St. Paul

does, by the expression, "Moses describeth the righteousness, which is of the law, that the man, who doeth those things, shall live by them."—Rom. x. 5.

⁵ Cent. Magd. Vol. III. p. 78.

⁶ Ibid. 81.

faith without works.—There needs not the circuitous and afflictive course of legal works, but God justifies in a summary way, those who believe. For, if thou confessest with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—Faith is a shield, not vain sophisms, not fallacious argumentations. These hinder the soul, faith protects it.—Know, that thou must not exact a reason from God; but however he dispose of thee, thou must believe him.”

It would have been wonderful indeed, if the Grecian divine before us, had been exempt from the errors relating to the will, which for ages of greater light had pervaded the eastern Church. He appears to have mixed the powers of grace and nature in the confused manner of Chrysostom; but it is not necessary to quote any passage for this purpose. A specimen of his writings on this point, may be seen in the 139th page, Vol. 8. *Magd.*

Giselbert, or a theologian, whose works bear that name, and who lived in or near this century, speaks of justification in the usual manner of Augustine, and of the Latin fathers, and with the same valuable tincture of divine truth. “When I speak of the righteousness of God,” says he, “I do not mean his absolute righteousness, but that, with which he clothes man, when he justifies the ungodly. The law and the prophets bear witness to this righteousness. The law, indeed, by commanding and threatening, and yet justifying no man, sufficiently indicates, that man is justified by the gift of God, through the quickening Spirit.—From God, beyond question, arises the beginning of salvation, never from us nor with us. But the consent and the work, though not originating from us, is, however, not without us.” Of the work of grace and of the duty of man in sanctification, he seems to speak with evangelical accuracy. The only error is, that by speaking of justification, as effected through the quickening Spirit, he seems to confound justification with sanctification. A common mistake!—The great luminary of Africa fell into it; and, by his authority, gave it a sanction throughout the western Church. In another passage, Giselbert, by speaking of a variety of justifications, which he multiplies to seven, and, with equal reason, he might have multiplied them to seventy times seven, tarnishes the precious doctrine of salvation exceedingly, and leaves no distinct ground for the afflicted conscience, to seek peace with God. “The first remission is baptism; the seventh is by tears and confession.” Whenever men are brought to feel what sin is,—what their own sin is,—they should learn

the Scripture-doctrine of justification, which is, from first to last, by grace alone through Jesus Christ, and by the instrumentality of faith. Careless and self-righteous spirits may trifle at their ease with other views of doctrine; the contrite spirit cannot rest but in Christ alone; and by the truth, as it is in Jesus, the conscience finds peace, and the heart is set at liberty to serve God in love. However, a serious investigation of the doctrine of Christian righteousness, argues some just concern for the salvation of the soul, and often leads to the most salutary consequences. The worst state of the Church is, when a deep silence is preserved concerning justification in any mode or sense, however men's minds may be amused or agitated with a variety of religious speculations or controversies. In that case, religion lives only in the brain, and has forsaken the conscience altogether.

But no writer of this age pierces more deeply into the spirit of divine truth, than the monk Radulph, who certainly flourished about the tenth century,* though very little is known concerning him. “Since,” says he, “in every good work, divine mercy prevents us, if a man seek what recompense he may render to the Lord, he finds it not, unless he receive it also from God. Divine grace, therefore, obliges us by its beneficence, and helps us when thus obliged, by many repetitions of the same grace, that we may not remain ungrateful.”—“In us all, who are by nature children of wrath, and born under the yoke of diabolical slavery, it is not expected, who will choose to come out of the mass, but whom celestial clemency will deliver. For it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”† And he adds more to the same purport, speaking very fully concerning the election of grace,‡ and connecting that doctrine with practical views of humility and gratitude.

Nilus, of Greek extraction, was born in the year 910, in Calabria. He was allowed to have lived in a state of eminent sanctity, though a married man; a singular circumstance for those times. After his wife's death he retired about the year 940 into a convent. In 976, the bishop of Calabria, and a lord of the territory, named Leo, with many priests went to visit him, rather with a view to try his skill than to derive any benefit from his instructions. Nilus treated them civilly, prayed with them a short time, and then put into Leo's hands a book of maxims concerning the small number of the saviour. The company expressed their dissatisfaction at the harshness of the doctrine. This induced Nilus to undertake the proof of it from the writings of the fathers, from St. Paul,

* Rom. x.
Ibid. 78.

Cent. Magd. Vol. III. p. 83.
Ibid. 139.

† Ibid. 363.

‡ Ibid. 65.

¶ Rom. xi. 5.

and from the Gospels. "These maxims seem terrible," said he, "but the only reason why they do so, is this, they condemn your practice. Unless you be sincerely holy, you cannot escape everlasting torments." They sighed, and they trembled. He had, however, said no more than what the whole New Testament inculcates continually. And the conduct of these men, and of men like these, who abound in every age, shews how little the Scripture is really believed. One of the company, whom Nilus knew to live in open sin, asked the monk, whether Solomon was saved or not? What is it to us, answered the upright Nilus, whether Solomon be saved or not. It is sufficient for you to know, that Christ pronounces damnation against all workers of iniquity. I should think it a more interesting object of inquiry for you, to consider whether you shall be saved or not. As for Solomon, the Scripture mentions not his repentance, as it does that of Manasseh.—What effect his discourse had upon his visitors we know not. But it deserved to be recorded, both to shew how dangerously men exercise their ingenuity in furnishing themselves with excuses to live in sin, and also to give a sample of plain dealing in those, who undertake to instruct mankind.

Euphraxus, an haughty nobleman, was governor of Calabria, under the Greek emperor. For the eastern part of Italy remained subject to that monarch a considerable time after the establishment of the popedom. Euphraxus sought every occasion of mortifying Nilus, because he gave him no presents, as other abbots did. Falling sick, however, he sent for him, and begged of him the monastic habit. Your baptismal vows suffice, said Nilus. Repentance requires no new vows, but a change of heart and life. This sentiment of Nilus was somewhat extraordinary for the tenth century. But Euphraxus, who sought to pacify his conscience at the easiest rate, with miserable ignorance importuned the abbot to invest him with the habit, to

which he at length consented. Euphraxus died three days after. Infidelity may smile, but if ever the conscience becomes thoroughly alarmed, even in the most hardened sceptics and sensualists, it will quickly find, that the best of our moral works are no covering to the soul from the justice of an holy God; and therefore, unless the real doctrine of salvation be understood, men in their distress will betake themselves to such paltry refuges as this of Euphraxus. A licentious Charles II. having sedulous recourse to popish ceremonies, in his dying hours, is not a singular case. Others, who, like him in health, despised the doctrines of grace, have done the same.

Nilus refused the offer of the bishopric of Capua: nor could the most flattering invitations induce him to go to Constantinople. He seemed likely to enjoy tranquil retirement to his death, in his convent. But Providence ordered it otherwise. The Saracens invaded Calabria, of which they afterwards gained possession. Nilus was driven from his home, and lived a long time in other convents. Otho III. upon a visit, pressed him to accept some situation in his dominions, wherever he should choose. Nilus thanked the emperor, but said, our Divine Master will not forsake my brethren, if they be true monks, after I am gone. Ask what you please, said the emperor, I will give it you with pleasure. "The only thing, I ask you," replied Nilus, is, "that you would save your soul. For you must give an account to God, as well as other men." This good abbot died at Tusculum, in an extreme old age in the year 1005.

Such was the light, scattered here and there, in the darkness of the times, by which the God of grace and mercy called, nourished, and sanctified his Church, and preserved to himself a godly seed in the earth, who should serve him in the Gospel of his Son, and prevent the cruel tyranny of the priace of darkness from completely overspreading the world.

CENTURY XI.

CHAPTER I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE genuine Church of Christ under the protection and influence of her supreme head, existed indeed in this century; but it would be in vain to attempt a regular and systema-

tical history of her progress. Some particular circumstances in different parts of the Christian world, some pious and successful endeavours to propagate the Gospel in pagan countries, some degrees of opposition to the reigning idolatry and superstition, and the writings of some pious and evangelical Theo-

logians, demonstrated, that the Spirit of God had not forsaken the earth altogether.

Indeed, if this century may be said, in some degree, to have excelled the last, the superiority must be ascribed to the improvements of learning. For the arts and sciences revived, in a measure, among the clergy and the monks, though not cultivated by any other set of men. I speak in regard to the western Church; for the eastern, enfeebled and oppressed by the Turks and Saracens from without, and by civil broils and factions from within, with difficulty preserved that degree of knowledge, which in those degenerate days still remained among the Greeks. I scarce find any vestiges of Christian piety among the eastern Christians at this time: indeed, the attentive reader must have observed how barren of that sort of events, which relate to Christian history, Asia in general had been for some ages.—So fatal was the influence of Mahometanism, and so judiciously hardened were the descendants of those, who first had honoured the religion of Jesus. Constantinople was still called a Christian city, and, in learning and politeness, was superior to any part of the west: but it is in Europe we are to look for the emanations of piety. France and Italy excelled particularly in the cultivation of learning. Robert king of France, the son and successor of Hugh Capet, who began to reign in 996, and died in 1031, distinguished himself as the friend of science. Even the ferocious Normans, whose wars and devastations were so terrible in Italy, France, and England, after they had established their respective governments, applied themselves to the cultivation of the human mind, and diffused some light among the people whom they had subdued. This was particularly the case with the southern parts of Italy, and with our own island. William the Conqueror, savage and imperious as he was, restored letters to England, which, amidst the Danish depredations, had been almost extinguished. And we shall see, at least, one learned foreigner at the head of the English Church, who, uniting piety to knowledge, was not unworthy of the Christian name. The learning itself, indeed, was not philosophical, like that of modern times, but consisted chiefly of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. It was, however, connected with divinity: the Scriptures were held in high reputation: the hardy presumption of subtle theory, and the supercilious negligence concerning piety and public worship were then unknown among men. In such circumstances, to have learned to read, to have attended to the meaning of words, and to have employed the powers of the human mind, in any manner, on the sacred writings, were blessings to mankind. In Italy and France

also there were some witnesses of divine truth, who opposed the abominations of the popedom.

The great scenes of political contention in this age, were, in the east, the Crusades; in the west, the disputes between the popes and the emperors. Civil, and even, what is called, ecclesiastical history, is full of these subjects. To my province they bear scarcely any relation. The former were attended with dreadful evils, and much augmented the influence of that pernicious superstition, which commutes for offences, and taught men to indulge themselves in the worst of vices, through the hope of finding their way to heaven by the merit of a Crusade. I shall, however, examine a little, hereafter, the grounds of the justice or injustice of these expeditions, because the character of some pious men of great eminence, is connected with the question. The disputes between the popes and the emperors, seem entirely barren of instructive incidents in religion. They confirm, nevertheless, the Christian in the belief of those Scriptures, which so accurately mark the character of Antichrist.* Gregory VII. commonly called Hildebrand, began the scheme, which fifty years after was completely accomplished, namely, of rescuing the election of the popes from the emperors, and of fixing it entirely in the college of Cardinals, in which it still continues. The celibacy of the Clergy, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, were established by the council of Placentia in 1095. Popery, in short, reigned triumphant, and no public profession of the Gospel, which professed independence of its domination, could be endured in Europe.

It will be proper to close this general view of the century with a circumstance or two concerning Africa. That once fruitful mother of the Churches, who gloried in her Cyprians and Augustines, had now only two bishops. The Saracens, masters of the country, persecuted the Christians there with great bitterness; yet so infatuated were the African Christians with the love of sin, that they quarrelled among themselves, and betrayed their bishop Cyriacus into the hands of the infidels, who much abused him. Gregory VII. wrote to the good bishop to comfort him in his distresses. A friendly letter, abounding with truly Christian sentiments, even from so imperious and unchristian a character as Hildebrand's might convey consolation to the mind of Cyriacus.† Piety, united with distress, stands aloof from politics, and thankfully embraces truth as sent from her God, whatever be the instrument.

He, who seriously reflects in what glory Asia and Africa once shone before God and

* Mosheim, Cent. XI. 470.

† See particularly 2 Thes. ii. 1 Tim. iv.

‡ Du Pin. 1st edit. Vol. IV. Cent. XI. p. 55.

his Christ; how dark and idolatrous, and, at the same time, how insensible of their spiritual misery the inhabitants of those two quarters of the globe were in this century, and continue even to the present times, will see with what reverential care the jewel of the Gospel should be cherished, while in our possession, lest we not only lose our own souls, but entail a curse on ages yet unborn.

CHAPTER II.

THE OPPOSITION MADE TO THE ERRORS OF POPERY.

In the year 1017, certain persons, real or supposed heretics, were discovered in France, who were said to hold, "that they did not believe—that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary;—that he died for the salvation of mankind;—that he was buried and rose again;—that baptism procured the remission of sins;—that the consecration by the priest constituted the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ;—and that it was profitable to pray to the martyrs and confessors." Other practical matters of a detestable nature were ascribed to them. On their refusal to recant before a council held at Orleans, thirteen of them were burnt alive. It is not easy to say, what was the true character of these men. It is certain, that they opposed the then reigning superstitions, and that they were willing to suffer for the doctrines, which they espoused. The crimes alleged are so monstrous, and incredible, as to render the charges adduced against their doctrines very suspicious. That they, however, were truly evangelical Christians, is what I dare not affirm.

Some time after these appeared, in Flanders, another sect, which was condemned in a synod held at Arras, in the year 1025, by Gerard, bishop of Cambrai and Arras. They had come from Italy, being the disciples of Gundulphus, who taught there several supposed heretical doctrines. Gerard himself, in a letter, which he wrote on the subject, observes, that the disciples of Gundulphus travelled up and down to multiply converts, and that they had withdrawn many from the belief of the real presence in the Sacrament; that they owned themselves to be the scholars of Gundulphus, who had instructed them in the evangelical and apostolical doctrine. "This," said they, "is our doctrine, to renounce the world, to bridle the lusts of the flesh, to maintain ourselves by the labour of our own hands, to do violence to no man, to love the brethren. If this plan of righteousness be observed, there is no

need of baptism; if it be neglected, baptism is of no avail." They particularly objected to the baptism of infants, because they were altogether incapable of understanding or confessing the truth. They denied the real presence of Christ's body in the Lord's supper: they rejected the consecration of Churches: they opposed various reigning superstitions, particularly the doctrine of purgatory and the practices connected with it. They likewise refused to worship the cross, or any images whatever. The bishop of Arras, having examined their supposed errors, and, in his own opinion, confuted them, drew up a confession of faith, contrary to those errors, which he required the heretics to sign. As they did not well understand the Latin tongue, he caused the confession to be explained to them in the vulgar tongue, by an interpreter; then, according to this account, they approved and signed the instrument, and were dismissed in peace by the bishop.

It is very difficult to judge a cause by hearing only one side, and that side prejudiced to an extreme. If we are tempted to look on the doctrines of Gundulphus, in a favourable light,—whatever we may think of the characters of these his timorous disciples,—from this short narrative of his enemies, how much more excellent might they appear, if we had his writings and sermons? As he did not deny the use of the Lord's supper, but only the doctrine of the real presence, it is probable that he held baptism also in a similar manner. If, however, he absolutely rejected the baptism of infants, the people, who call themselves baptists at this day may seem with justice to claim Gundulphus as belonging to their sect. The nature of mankind, ever prone to run from one extreme to another, will easily account for this circumstance of the rejection of infant-baptism. The practice had long been sullied with superstitious fooleries: the transition to its total rejection was natural. Yet we shall afterwards see reason to doubt, whether this people did deny the absolute unlawfulness of infant-baptism, when we come to consider the religious views of the Waldenses; for the probability is strong, that generally those called heretics in France, Flanders, and Italy, in these middle ages, were similar to each other in doctrines and customs. We have seen, however, a noble testimony to the existence of evangelical truth, a body of men in Italy before the year 1026, in doctrine and practice directly opposite to the Church of Rome, spreading purity of Christian worship through the world with all their might, and distinguishing themselves from the general mass of Christians in the west. I cannot believe that they held marriage as unlawful, though they were charged with this sentiment by their enemies: and, notwithstanding some

entire and blameless, it is not to be doubted; but that, on the whole, they were of the true Church of Christ. Faithfully to withstand idolatry and the reigning corruptions, required a light and strength far above nature, and I have only to regret, that, after a careful search, this is all the account I can find of them.

Not long after the supposed heretics of Orleans, arose the famous Berengarius of Tours, who wrote against the doctrine of the real presence. His writings called forth the most learned Romanists to defend the tenets of Paschasius Radbertus; and Berengarius was compelled to renounce, and to burn his writings. But he recanted again and again, and returned, says a contemporary popish author, like the dog to his vomit. Whether he died in the same sentiments, is strongly contested between the papists and the protestants. The former quote William of Malmebury, who says, he died trembling. "This day," said he, "will my Lord Jesus Christ appear to me, either to glory by his mercy through my repentance, or, as I fear, on the account of others, to my punishment."

The sentiment, whether founded on fact or not, is strongly expressive of the genius of the then reigning religion, which excluded the spirit of adoption and filial confidence in God through Christ, and supported the Spirit of bondage and anxiety. And the effect was, in this case, proportional to the cause. Men had lost the Christian article of justification through faith alone; and, believing salvation to be suspended on the merit of human works, they found it impossible for Berengarius, even on the most sincere repentance for his supposed heresy, to countervail the mischiefs which he had done by misleading others. Whether then we suppose the confession of Berengarius to be a forgery, or a real fact, it was delivered in the spirit of those, who weighed human merits and demerits in opposite scales, and found no other method of determining the question of a man's salvation or destruction, than that, which should result from the comparison of his good actions with his crimes. How impossible is it to give solid peace of conscience to a sinful creature by such a procedure! Joy, and love, and cheerful activity in the Christian life can have no existence on such a plan: but such was the general spirit of the religion of the times we are reviewing. It is not easy to decide whether the papists or the protestants were in the right, in the determination of the question, In what sen-

timents did Berengarius die? The former have the advantage of positive testimony in their favour. The question is, however, perfectly immaterial. The doctrine of the real presence depends not on the character of Berengarius for its decision. I know no marks of his Christian piety; and his repeated dissimulations render him no honour to either party. It is, however, of some moment to observe, that he was the instrument of calling forth a degree of salutary opposition to the errors of the times. He called the Church of Rome a church of malignant, the council of vanity, and the seat of Satan. And he corrupted, say some old historians, almost all the French, Italians, and English, with his depravities. The expressions are much too strong; but, no doubt, a salutary check was given to the growing superstitions: the opposition to the popedom, though it did not lay hold of the central truths of the Gospel, might yet pave the way for still more effective exertions; and served at least to inform mankind, that the court of Rome was not infallible.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

THE work of Christian piety, which had been successfully carried on in Hungary, was now crowned with still greater prosperity. Stephen the king, who had been baptised by Adalbert bishop of Prague, and who began to reign in the year 997, shewed himself a zealous patron of the Gospel. Under his auspices, Astrucius came into Hungary, opened a school, and educated ministers, while Boniface, one of his disciples, preached the word in Lower Hungary. The zeal of Stephen, indeed, was much stimulated by his pious queen Gisla, daughter of the emperor Henry II. He often accompanied the preachers, and pathetically exhorted his subjects. He suppressed barbarous customs, and restrained blasphemy, theft, adultery, and murder. His kindness to the poor, and, indeed, his whole moral conduct was admirable. His excellent code of laws are to this day the basis of the laws of Hungary. It is inscribed to his son Emeric, whom he exhorts to cultivate sincere humility, the true glory of a king. He forbids in it all impiety, the violation of Sunday-duties, and irreverent behaviour in the house of God. This monarch defeated the prince of Transilvania, who had invaded his dominions, and took him prisoner; but restored him to liberty, on condition that he should allow the Gospel to be preach-

* Bertold, Presbyter of Constantia. See Bishop Newton's 3d Vol. of the Prophecies, p. 164. I have examined Dr Pin, Natalis Alexander, A. Butler, and Mosheim on this subject, and find the whole mass of information so very uninteresting, though prolix beyond measure, that the few sentences in the text seem to me all that is needful to be observed on the Berengarian controversy.

ed to the Transilvanians, without molestation. Stephen was a prosperous monarch, but found afflictions at home in the loss of all his children. His mind was, however, improved in divine things by his sufferings. He laboured three years under a complication of diseases, and died in the year 1038.^a He had lived to see all Hungary become externally Christian, though Christianity existed there adulterated, or clouded at least by papal domination, and by the fashionable superstitions.

Gerard, a Venetian, had been much employed by king Stephen, as bishop of Choriad, a diocese of which two thirds of the inhabitants were idolaters. In less than a year, they, in general, had received the forms of Christianity from the pious labours of Gerard. The power of Stephen had seconded the views of the bishop; but the prospect changed on the king's decease. His nephew and successor Peter, persecuted Gerard: he was, however, expelled by his subjects in the year 1042, and Abas, a nobleman, was made king of Hungary, who being slain after two years, Peter was recalled, but was once more banished. Andrew, the son of Ladislaus, the cousin of king Stephen, was appointed king, on the condition of restoring idolatry. Gerard and three other bishops endeavoured to divert him from the design. But they were assaulted on the road by duke Vathas, a zealous pagan. Andrew himself came up to the spot, and rescued one of the bishops: the other three, of whom Gerard was one, had fallen by the arm of the barbarian.—It is probable, however, that Divine Providence permitted their atrocious villany for the good of the Church. The heart of Andrew was moved: he had seen of what idolatry was capable: he examined Christianity, received it, repressed idolatry, and reigned successfully. After the Hungarians had seen such a prince as Stephen, and had felt the good effects on society resulting from the establishment of Christianity, that they could still prefer idolatry, is a deplorable proof of the native power of human depravity. What long continued exertions are necessary, to establish genuine goodness in a country!

In Denmark, Othingar, a bishop of that country, extended the pale of the Church by his labours; and Unwan, the bishop of Hamburg, under the patronage of the emperor Henry II. cut down the idolatrous groves, which the people of his diocese frequented, and erected churches in their stead. Godesebalcus, duke of the Vandals, revived among his subjects the regard for the Gospel, which they had once embraced, and which they had afterward neglected. It is not easy to know precisely, what were the

limits of his dominions. But I find Imbeck, Mecklenburg, and Slavonia mentioned as belonging to, or as, at least, contiguous to his dukedom. Much has been said in praise of this prince, and of the success of his labours.^a He is reported to have, in person, exhorted his people with much affection in the public assemblies; and John a Scotchman, the bishop of Mecklenburg, baptized great numbers of the Slavonians. Yet this last people, together with the Obotriti, whose capital town was Mecklenburg, the Venedi, who dwelt on the banks of the Vistula, and the Prussians, continued Pagans, in a great measure, throughout this century. Boleslaus, king of Poland, attempted to force these nations into a profession of Christianity; and some of his attendants used methods to evangelize them, which were better adapted to the nature of the Gospel. Boniface, in particular,^a and eighteen other persons, set out from Germany, to labour among the Prussians, and were massacred by that barbarous people. They seem to have been among the last of the European nations, who submitted to the yoke of Christ. In the zealous attempts made, however, for their conversion, though unsuccessful, we see abundant proofs, that the spirit of propagating the Gospel, which was the brightest gem of these dark ages, still existed.

Nor was the zeal for propagating the Gospel, with which our ancestors had been so eminently endowed, evaporated in this century. In the year 1001, at the desire of Olaf II. king of Sweden, some English priests were sent over into the north by king Ethelred. Of these Sigefrid, archdeacon of York, was one. His labours were very successful, and he was appointed bishop of Wexia, in East-Gothland. Having established the churches there, he preached to the infidels in West-Gothland, leaving his nephews to govern his diocese, while he was absent. But they were murdered by the pagan nobility of the country. A melancholy proof, how strong the spirit of idolatry still remained in these northern regions! The same kind of family-pride, which, at this day, preserves the remnants of popery in protestant countries, preserved the existence of paganism in Sweden. Sigefrid, however, returned into his diocese, died there a natural death, and was buried at Wexia.

This man is said to have finished his course about the year 1002; an account inconsistent, as to the order of time, with that which has been already given. But not to trouble the reader with such niceties of chronology, as at this distance of time are impossible to be adjusted, it is more material to observe, that he appears to have been an

^a Alban Butler. ^a Cent. Magd. Cent. XI. ^a Id.

^a Crantzius in Vandalia.

^a Mosheim, Cent. XI. Chap. I.

apostolic person; that on his first arrival in Sweden, he was obliged, chiefly, to preach by interpreters; that he prevailed on the king to spare the murderers of his nephews; and, that though he was very poor, he refused to touch the fine, which had been exacted on those murderers, and which had been offered to him as a present by the Swedish monarch. ^b Gotebald, another English missionary, was appointed bishop in Norway, and preached in Schonen.

Ulfrid, a learned and virtuous Englishman, preached the faith, first in Germany, afterwards in Sweden, under the patronage of king Olaus; where he was an instrument of converting many, till, in the year 1028, preaching against the idol Thor, and hewing it down with an hatchet, he was slain by the pagans. See Adam of Bremen, who wrote his history of the Church in 1080.

Canute, king of Denmark, natural son of Swein II. whose great uncle Canute had reigned in England, was carefully educated by his father, who had no legitimate issue. He became king of Denmark by election, warred against the turbulent barbarians his neighbours, and planted the profession of Christianity in Gourland, Samogitia, and Livonia. His zeal for the maintenance of the Clergy having disgusted his subjects, he was deserted and murdered. His brother Olaus succeeded, whose successor Eric III. restored the authority of the clergy. The life of Canute was written by Ælnoth, a monk of Canterbury, who lived twenty-four years in Denmark, and who wrote in 1105. He tells us, that the first preachers of the faith in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, were English priests; that the Danes embraced the gospel with zeal, but that the Swedes were more obstinate in their idolatry, among whom Eschil, an Englishman, was martyred, while he was preaching Christ to some savage tribes. That Sweden, however, was chiefly evangelized by Anglo-Saxon missionaries, is the remark of Stiernman in his treatise on the state of learning among the ancient Swedes. Alban Butler, Vol. II.

Olaus, king of Norway, assisted the Danes against Ethelred of England, and, in his return from England, carried over several priests; one of whom, named Grimkele, was appointed bishop of Drontheim, the capital of king Olaus. This prince abolished idolatrous customs in Norway, Orkney, and Iceland. He used to travel with zealous preachers, exhorting his subjects, and destroying temples. The pagans, at length, aided by Canute of England, defeated and slew him in the year 1030. His son Magnus was called home from Russia, and became king of Norway in 1039. Alban Butler, Vol. VII.

The triumphs of the Gospel in Denmark were, upon the whole, very conspicuous in this century. Hear the account of Adam of Bremen, who wrote concerning the situation of this country in the year 1080: "Look," says he, "at that very ferocious nation of the Danes—For a long time they have been accustomed, in the praises of God, to resound Alleluia—Look at that pyrratical people—They are now content with the fruits of their own country. Look at that horrid region, formerly altogether inaccessible on account of idolatry—they now eagerly admit the preachers of the word."^c

From this very imperfect account, for which I am obliged to Gibbon, and which he candidly admits to be true, we may collect, what a blessed work it is, to propagate the Gospel of Christ; that no men deserve better of mankind than faithful missionaries; and, that the allegorical descriptions of the effects of real Christianity, which we meet with in the prophets, have a deep and solid meaning.^d To see Danes and Englishmen enjoying together, in mutual confidence and charity, the blessings of true religion, must have been surprising to those, who had known, with what savage barbarity the former had desolated the habitations of the latter. In truth, that religion which could mollify, transform, and rectify the heart of an ancient Dane, must indeed be divine. These are the triumphs of the Gospel. It was the preaching of the Cross, attended with the energy of the Holy Spirit, which effected this salutary change of manners in the north of Europe. Denmark had inflicted much evil on her southern neighbours, and they requited her with spiritual blessings. It is remarkable, that, to this day, no nation has exceeded the Danes in labours for the propagation of the Gospel, in proportion to their abilities and opportunities. And it must be confessed, that they owe much to mankind on the score of gratitude, for the favours of the same kind, which their ancestors received.

I cannot, for want of materials, dwell on the particulars of the conversion of this people.^e But the durable change of their manners intimates, that their country must have been blessed with one of those gracious "ef-

^c Gibbon, Vol. V. C. 55.

^d Isaiah xi. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid.

^e One instance, however, is recorded, that will deserve to be mentioned. William, an English priest, attended Canute the great, in one of his voyages from England to Denmark. Moved with pity on account of the idolatry of the Danes, he desired to be left as a missionary. His labours were successful, and he was appointed bishop of Roschild, in Zealand. King Swein having put to death some persons without a legal trial, William forbade his entrance into the Church. Several courtiers drawing their swords, the bishop offered them his neck. Swein submitted, conformed to the rules of penance imposed by William, and ever after concurred with his views. The bishop of Roschild died in the year 1067. Alban Butler.

^b Olaus Magn. B. 17. C. 20. Collier's Ecc. Hist. Alban Butler, Vol. II.

fusions" of the Holy Spirit, the consequences of which are commonly felt for ages after. Toward the close of this century, the northern nations ceased to invade the south-ern entirely. The last attempt was made by Magnus, king of Norway, on the isle of Angles; but he was repulsed by Hugh Earl of Shrovesbury,¹ in the eleventh year of William Rufus. "That restless people seem about this time to have learned the use of tillage, which thenceforth kept them at home, and freed the other nations of Europe from the devastations spread over them by those piratical invaders. This proved one great cause of the subsequent settlement and improvement of the southern nations."

I quote the words of Hume, which represent in a very perspicuous manner the advantages resulting from the civilization of the north, not only to the Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes, but also to the south of Europe. It is in assigning the cause of this happy change, that I am obliged to dissent from the elegant historian. He thinks that the effect is sufficiently accounted for by these northern people having learned the use of tillage. But, besides, that he has no historical evidence of this fact, and supports it by mere conjecture, it is fair to ask, How came they to be so docile and tractable, as to submit to the arts of agriculture? Does a nation, habituated to arms and to idleness, easily give itself up to industry, and the arts of peace? If we can answer this question aright, we shall know to what is to be ascribed the happy transformation of the north. Scanty as my materials have been, I have yet shown, that the Gospel had now been, for three centuries, preached in Scandinavia. To this, doubtless, as the principal cause, we must attribute the happy alteration of manners in those barbarous regions. Christian godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. While it conducts enslaved souls into liberty, and, turning them from the power of Satan to God, invests them with the garments of salvation, it also meliorates their condition in this life, and diffuses, through the world, the most salutary precepts of peace, order, and tranquillity. Let not men expect the general civilisation of the globe by any other methods. When the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, then will the nations learn war no more. We enjoy, at this day, the advantages of society derived to Europe, from the propagation of the Gospel, while we ungratefully depreciate the labours of those Christian missionaries, through which, under God, those advantages were conveyed to us. Our Saviour has directed us, to pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his har-

vest; and every one, who breathes the genuine spirit of the Gospel, will devoutly obey the precept.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND

As the importance of our own country began to be displayed in this century, it will be proper to take some notice of the appearance of religion in an island, which, we have seen, had so distinguished a share, in diffusing divine truth through the northern parts of Europe. Even the very little of evangelical religion, which we may discover, may deserve our attention.

In the reign of Ethelrid, a very cruel massacre of the Danes was, by royal order, made throughout his dominions. The rage of the populace, excited by so many injuries, was extreme, and made no distinction between the innocent and the guilty. Swein, king of Denmark, amply revenged those cruelties, by repeated devastations: and the unwelcome Ethelred fled into Normandy to save his life, while his subjects felt all the miseries, which might be expected from incensed and victorious barbarians. Among other instances of their hostilities, they levied a contribution on the county of Kent, and murdered the archbishop of Canterbury, who had refused to countenance the exaction.²

The author, whose short account I have followed, does not deign to give us the name of this archbishop, nor to relate a single circumstance of his murder. I cannot but think, however, that he would have enlarged on the subject, if it would have gratified his dislike of religion. But thus a conduct, at once the most magnanimous and patriotic, is buried in obscurity, because the hero was an ecclesiastic. Let it, however, receive the justice, which is due to it, from these memoirs.

The Danes were besieging Canterbury, when Alphege, the archbishop, was intruded by his friends to save his own life. "God forbid," said Alphege, "that I should tarnish my character by so inglorious a conduct; and should be afraid of going to heaven, because a violent death lies across in the passage. I have been the instrument of drawing over several considerable persons among these Danes to the Gospel: if this be a fault, I shall be happy in suffering for it. I have ransomed some of my countrymen, and supported others when in captivity. If Danes be angry, because I have reproofed their sins, it behoves me to remember him,

¹ Hume, Vol. I. C. V.

² Hume, Vol. I. p. 144.

Collier's Ess. Hist.

who hath said, "If thou give not the wicked warning, his blood will I require at thine hand." It is the character of an hireling to leave the sheep, when he seeth the wolf coming. I mean, therefore, to stand the shock, and submit to the order of Divine Providence.¹

The archbishop, influenced by these motives, remained in Canterbury, and exhorted the people, as a Christian pastor. But the Danes entered the city by violence, and exercised the most horrid barbarities, particularly on ladies of quality, whom they dragged to the stake and burnt to death, nor did they spare even infants. Alphege, moved at these hideous scenes, had the boldness to expostulate with them. "The cradle," says he, "can afford no triumphs for soldiers. It would be better for you to exercise your vengeance on me, whose death may give some celebrity to your names. Remember, some of your troops, have, through my means, been brought over to the faith of Christ, and I have frequently rebuked you for your acts of injustice." The Danes, exasperated at his words, seized, and bound the archbishop, and kept him prisoner for seven months. His liberty, however, was offered to him, on condition of immense payments to be made by himself and by Ethelred the king. He told them, that the sums were too large to be raised by any exactions, and he firmly refused to drain the treasures of the Church, for the sake of saving his life; accounting it wrong to give to pagans those sums, which had been devoted to the honour of religion, and to the relief of the poor. The merciless Danes, enraged beyond measure, threw him down and stoned him, while he prayed for his enemies, and for the Church; and, at length, a certain Dane, lately become a Christian, dispatched him, in order to free him from his pain.—One of his successors, the famous Lanfranc, doubted whether Alphege ought to be looked on as a martyr, because he had not died explicitly for the Christian faith. But Anselm, a still more famous personage, told Lanfranc, that Alphege was a real martyr, who died rather than commit an unjust thing. Nor is it easy to conceive that any spirit, less than that of a Christian, could have conducted him through such a scene, and supported him with so much fortitude and charity.—Alphege was murdered in the year 1013.

A preceding archbishop, probably his immediate predecessor, Elfric, in the year 1006, had directed in one of the canons published at a council,² in which he presided, that every parish-priest should be obliged on Sundays and on other holidays, to explain the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Gospel for the day, before the people, in the Eng-

lish tongue. While historians enlarge on the quarrels between the papacy and the civil power, and descant, with tedious prolixity, on the superstitions, which were in vogue during the dark ages, they are too apt to pass over in a cursory manner, such facts as this, which has been mentioned. Let the reader, who has seriously considered the importance and excellency of evangelical truth, reflect on the preciousness of the doctrines, which the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and some of the plainest and most practical passages of the New Testament, do either exhibit or imply; and he will be convinced, that, if the canon of Elfric had been obeyed with any tolerable degree of spirit and exactness in a number of parishes in England, the ignorance and darkness could not have been so complete nor so universal, as we are generally taught to believe it was. Such bishops as Elfric and Alphege must have been useful lights in those times. The Gospels read in the Churches, I suppose, were either the same as, or similar to, those which are read at this day; nor is it to be imagined, that a familiar exposition of them, in conjunction with the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, would be in vain: because, in every age, the preaching of Christian fundamentals is accompanied with a divine energy, and the word returns not void to its Divine Author, but prospers in the thing whereto he sends it.¹ The mixture of superstitious inventions might adulterate, but could not altogether destroy the efficacy of the Word of God. Nor can I doubt but many at this day, who boast of their exemption from papal ignorance, and who call themselves enlightened, because they have been refined by philosophical and political knowledge, are themselves much inferior in Christian light and spirit to many, who lived in the dark times of the eleventh century, under the benefit of such advantages of instruction, as the canon before us afforded. For that elementary knowledge, which is the object of the canon, is ever more salutary in its influence, than the most ingenious subtleties of literary refinement in religion. These, like the spider's web, are intricate, and are often found to be flimsy and void of any substantial advantage to mankind. Armed with catechetical knowledge, I conceive that serious minds would in that age find rest and food to their souls; and the love of God being, by this means, shed abroad in the heart, would constrain the missionaries of that period to diffuse the Gospel in the northern regions with ability and success.

The facts, on which these reflections are founded, may shew us, that God had not forsaken this island during the disastrous reign of Ethelred, though the political hemisphere

¹ Osborn de W. Elphagi. Hoveden's Annals.

² Collier.

was gloomy beyond expression. Ethelred himself, though he returned into his kingdom, was never able to make head against the Danes, who at length, in the year 1017, brought the English into total subjection. Their king Canute, and his two sons in succession, governed England, which, however, recovered itself from the Danish yoke, and received Edward the Confessor, the son of Ethelred, as its monarch, in the year 1041. But the Saxon line, though restored, was unable to maintain itself on the throne, and soon sunk under the power of William the Norman, who in the year 1066, beheld himself the sovereign of England, which continues under the government of his posterity to this day.

Under William,* the papal power, which hitherto had by no means been so absolute in England as in the southern countries, began to be felt more strongly, and soon reached the same height, which it had attained in France and Italy. The tyrant found it a convenient engine for the support of his own despotic authority: and, while he took care that every one of his subjects should, in ecclesiastical matters, bow under the yoke of the bishop of Rome, he reserved to himself the supreme dominion in civil affairs, and exercised it with the most unqualified rigour. Lanfranc, whom he appointed archbishop of Canterbury, zealously supported the power of Rome, and confirmed the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation by his influence and authority. His successor, Anselm, was no less devoted to the pope, and maintained several famous contests with his sovereign William Rufus, the son and successor of the Conqueror. This archbishop contributed much, by his influence, to settle the celibacy of the clergy in England; and it must be confessed, that even the virtues of this great man, through the peculiar infelicity of the times, were attended with great disadvantages to the state of society. For it ought to be observed, that, if we set aside his attachment to the authority of the pope, and his passion for the fashionable superstitions, his conduct was pious and exemplary: his zeal against the luxury, simony, and vices of the great was laudable: and, above all, his defence of evangelical truth, adorned by an upright course of life and conversation, preserved under God some genuine remains of godliness in the nation. Nor ought we to follow implicitly the ideas of our protestant historians, who, in every debate between the king and the Church, are sure to decide

against the latter. What could be more arbitrary, for instance, than the demand of a thousand pounds which William Rufus made upon Anselm? and what more warrantable than the conduct of the latter? He offered the king five hundred pounds, which were refused in disgust. Anselm gave the sum to the poor, rather than rack his tenants to double it, and said to the tyrant,—"If I am used according to my station, all I have is at your service;—if I am treated as a slave, I shall keep my property to myself."

And undoubtedly the rapacity and profaneness of the Norman princes, particularly of William Rufus, in the seizure and alienation of ecclesiastical benefices, were justly opposed by the bishops of those times. It is only to be wished, that they had conducted their opposition on the grounds of Scripture, and the precedents of the primitive Church,—not on the authority of the Court of Rome.

Nothing else seems to have occurred, deserving a place in these memoirs, in the general history of our island, during the course of this century, except what relates to the personal character of Margaret queen of Scotland: a woman of the rarest piety, and of a character fitted to throw a lustre on the purest ages. She was sister to Edgar Athelin, the grandson of Edmund Ironside, who was the son and successor of Ethelred. Edgar was a peculiar favourite of the English, because he was the last of the Saxon line of princes. In the reign of William the Norman, he and his sister found a safe retreat in Scotland, under the protection of Malcolm, who, by the assistance of Edward the Confessor, had recovered the throne of Scotland from the usurper Macbeth. Malcolm married the English princess. Wonderful things are related of her piety, liberality, and humility. Through her influence, the ferocious spirit of her husband received an happy tincture of humanity. She was enabled to reform the kingdom of Scotland in a great degree, and to introduce a more serious regard to the duties of the Lord's day, than had been known in that country. She had by Malcolm six sons and two daughters. Three of her sons reigned successively, and were esteemed excellent monarchs. Her daughter Matilda was wife to Henry I. of England, and was looked on as a pious Christian. Margaret had taken uncommon care of her children's education, and the fruits of her labours appeared in their lives. Theodoric, her confessor, observes, that she was remarkably attentive in public prayer. "And," says he, "she would discourse with me concerning the sweetness of everlasting life, in such a manner, as to draw tears from my eyes." This same Theodoric, a monk of Durham, wrote her life. She was afflict-

* Osmund, a Norman, privy counsellor to William the Conqueror, afterwards bishop of Salisbury, corrected the liturgy used in his diocese. And he was thought to have done the work so judiciously, that the service "*In Usque Sarum*," was received in other dioceses, and became common throughout England. For, before this time, every diocese had its appropriate liturgy. Collier's Eccles. History.

ed with sickness at the very time in which her husband Malcolm was slain at Alnwick in Northumberland, in the time of William Rufus, in 1093. The bitter news was brought to her ears: her reflection upon it was truly Christian. "I thank thee, O Lord, that in sending me so great an affliction, thou wouldst purify me from my sins. O Lord Jesus Christ, who by thy death hast given life to the world, deliver me from evil." She survived this event only a few days. A princess of such accomplishments, could not have shone in vain in Scotland; but, most probably, must have led many, in a rude and ignorant age, to think that there is something real in godliness.

CHAPTER V.

ANSELM.

THAT good men frequently appear to more advantage in private life than in public, is a remark which was perhaps never better exemplified than in this prelate, of whom all that is known by the generality of readers is, that he was a strenuous supporter of the papal dominion in England. I can easily conceive that he might be influenced by the purest motives in this part of his conduct, when I reflect on the shameless and profane manners of the Norman princes. But his private life was purely his own, originating more directly from the honest and good heart, with which, through grace, he was eminently endowed. As a divine and a Christian, he was the first of characters in this century, and will, therefore, deserve some attention.

He¹ was born at Aoust in Piedmont. From early life his religious cast of mind was so prevalent; that, at the age of fifteen, he offered himself to a monastery, but was refused, lest his father should have been displeased. He afterwards became entangled in the vanities of the world; and, to his death, he bewailed the sins of his youth. Becoming a scholar of Lanfranc, his predecessor in the See of Canterbury, at that time a monk at Bec in Normandy, he commenced monk in the year 1060, at the age of twenty-seven. He afterwards became the prior of the monastery. His progress in religious knowledge was great; but mildness and charity seem to have predominated in all his views of piety. The book, commonly called Augustine's meditations, was chiefly abstracted from the writings of Anselm. At the age of forty-five, he became abbot of Bec. Lanfranc dying in 1089, William Rufus usurped the revenues of the

See of Canterbury, and treated the monks of the place in a barbarous manner. For several years this profane tyrant declared; that none should have the See while he lived; but a fit of sickness overawed his spirit; and conscience, the voice of God, which often speaks even in the proudest and the most insensible, severely reproved his wickedness; insomuch, that he nominated Anselm to be the successor of Lanfranc. That Anselm should have accepted the office with much reluctance, under such a prince, is by no means to be wondered at: and, the more upright and conscientious men are, the more wary and reluctant will they always be found in accepting offices of so sacred a nature; though it is natural for men of a secular spirit to judge of others by themselves, and to suppose the "nolo episcopari" to be, without any exceptions, the language of hypocrisy.

Anselm pressed the king to allow the calling of councils, in order to institute an inquiry into crimes and abuses; and also to fill the vacant abbeys, the revenues of which William had reserved to himself with sacrilegious avarice. Nothing but the conviction of conscience, and the ascendancy, which real uprightness maintains over wickedness and profligacy, could have induced such a person as William Rufus, to have promoted Anselm to the See, though he must have foreseen how improbable it was, that the abbot would ever become the tame instrument of his tyranny and oppression. In fact, Anselm, finding the Church overborn by the iniquities of the tyrant, retired to the continent with two monks, one of whom, named Eadmer, wrote his life.

Living a retired life in Calabria, he gave employment to his active mind in writing a treatise on the reasons why God should become man, and on the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation; a work at that time useful to the Church of Christ, as he refuted the sentiments of Roscelin, who had published erroneous views concerning the Trinity. For, after a sleep of many ages, the genius of Arianism or Socinianism, or both, had awaked, and taken advantage of the general ignorance, to corrupt the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Anselm knew how to reason closely and systematically, after the manner of the famous Peter Lombard, master of the sentences, and bishop of Paris; and he was properly the first of the scholastic divines. The method of ratiocination then used was, no doubt, tedious, verbose, and subtle; and, in process of time, grew more and more perplexed. It was, however, preferable to the dissipation and inanity, which, in many publications of our times, pretend to the honour of good sense and sound wisdom, though devoid of learning and industry: and the furniture of

¹ Butler, Vol. IV.

the schools, in the hands of a fine genius like Anselm, adorned with solid piety, and under the control of a good understanding, stemmed the torrent of profane infidelity, and ably supported the cause of godliness in the world. Roscelin was confuted, and the common orthodox doctrine of the Trinity upheld itself in the Church. What were the precise views of Roscelin will be better understood, when we come to introduce one of his scholars, the famous Peter Abelard, to the reader's notice.

Anselm, weary of an empty title of dignity, and seeing no probability of being enabled to serve the Church in the archbishopric, intreated the pope to give him leave to resign it, but in vain. Nor does he seem to have been justly chargeable with the display of an "ostentatious humility," when he had first refused the promotion. The integrity, with which he had acted, ever since that promotion had taken place, ought to have rescued him from the illiberal censure. "Rufus had detained in prison several persons, whom he had ordered to be freed during the time of his penitence; he still preyed upon the ecclesiastical benefices; the sale of spiritual dignities continued as open as ever; and he kept possession of a considerable part of the revenues belonging to the See of Canterbury." Was it a crime, or was it an instance of laudable integrity in Anselm, to remonstrate against such proceedings? I suppose the candour and good sense of the author, to whom I allude, would have inclined him to praise that upright conduct, for which Anselm was obliged to retire to the continent, had not this same Anselm been a priest, and a priest too of sincere zeal and fervour. In justice to Anselm, it should, moreover, be observed, that one reason, why he wished to resign his archbishopric, was, that he believed he might be of more service to the souls of men in a merely clerical character, which was more obscure. And he was naturally led to assign this reason to the pope, from the observation, which he made of the effect of his preaching on audiences in Italy.

Men of superior talents, however, are frequently born to drudge in business or in arts, whether they be in prosperous or in adverse circumstances. For mankind feel the need of such men; and they themselves are not apt to bury their powers in indolence. A council was called at Bari by Pope Urban, to settle with the Greeks the dispute which had long separated the eastern and western Churches, concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost. For the Greek Church, it should seem, without any scriptural reason, had denied the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son; and had, there-

fore, thrust the words *FILIOQUE* out of the Nicene Creed. While the disputants were engaged, Anselm, said the pope, Anselm, our father and master, where are you? The archbishop arose, and by his powers of argumentation silenced the Greeks.

At Lyons, he wrote on the conception of the Virgin, and on original sin; and thus he employed himself in religious, not in secular cares, during the whole of his exile. A strong proof of his exemption from that domineering ambition, of which he has been accused. In the year 1100 he heard of the death of his royal persecutor, which he is said to have seriously lamented, and returned into England, by the invitation of Henry I. To finish, at once, the account of his unpleasant contests with the Norman princes, he, at length, was enabled to compromise them. The great object of controversy was the same in England, as in the other countries of Europe, namely, "Whether the investiture of bishoprics should be received from the king or from the pope." Anselm, moved undoubtedly by a conscientious zeal, because all the world bore witness to his integrity, was decisive for the latter; and the egregious iniquities, and shameless violations of all justice and decorum, practised by princes in that age, would naturally strengthen the prejudices of Anselm's education. To receive investiture from the pope for the spiritual jurisdiction, and, at the same time, to do homage to the king for the temporalities, was the only medium, which in those times could be found, between the pretensions of the civil and ecclesiastical dominion; and matters were settled, on this plan, both in England and in Germany.

If Anselm then contributed to the depression of the civil power, and the confirmation of the papal, he was unhappily carried away by a popular torrent, which few minds had power to resist. It seems certain, however, that ambition formed no part of this man's character. "While I am with you," he would often say to his friends, "I am like a bird in a cave amidst her young, and enjoy the sweets of retirement and social affections. But when I am thrown into the world, I am like the same bird hunted and harassed by ravens or other fowls of prey: the innumerable of various cares distract me; and secular employments, which I love not, vex my soul." He, who spent a great part of his life in retirement, who thought, spoke, and wrote so much of vital godliness; and whose moral character was allowed, even by his enemies, to have ever been without a blot, deserves to be believed in these declarations.

Let us then attend to those traits of character, which were more personal; and in

† See Hume, Vol. I. p. 302.

† See his life, written by Eadmer.

which the heart of the man more plainly appears. He practised that, which all godly persons have ever found salutary and even necessary, namely, retired and devotional meditation, and even watched long in the night for the same purpose. One day, an hare, pursued by the hounds, ran under his horse for refuge, as he was riding. The object, bringing at once to his recollection a most awful scene, he stopped and said weeping, "this hare reminds me of a sinner just dying, surrounded with devils, waiting for their prey." It was in this manner, that he used to spiritualise every object, a practice ever derided by profane minds, whether performed injudiciously or not; but to which, in some degree, every devout and pious spirit on earth has been addicted.

In a national synod, held at St. Peter's, Westminster, he forbade men to be sold as cattle, which had till then been practised. For the true reliefs and mitigations of human misery lay entirely, at that time, in the influence of Christianity; and small as that influence then was, the ferocity of the age was tempered by it; and human life was thence prevented from being entirely degraded to a level with that of the beasts which perish.

Anselm died in the sixteenth year of his archbishopric, and in the seventy-sixth of his age. Toward the end of his life, he wrote on the will, predestination, and grace, much in Augustine's manner. In prayers, meditations, and hymns, he seems to have had a peculiar delight. Eadmer says, that he used to say, "If he saw hell open, and sin before him, he would leap into the former, to avoid the latter." I am sorry to see this sentiment, which, stripped of figure, means no more than what all good men allow, that he feared sin more than punishment, aspersed by so good a divine as Fox the martyrologist. But Anselm was a papist, and the best protestants have not been without their prejudices.

But it is time to let Anselm speak for himself; it is possible; we may hear something by no means unworthy the attention of the most intelligent Christians. A direction for the visitation of the sick was composed by Anselm; the substance of which is as follows. Two previous questions were to be asked by the minister; the first was, Dost thou believe that thou deservest damnation? the second was, Dost thou intend to lead a new life? When the sick man had returned an answer in the affirmative to these questions, he was further asked, Dost thou believe, that thou canst not be saved, but by the death of Christ? The sick man answered, I do so believe. Then the minister says to him, See then, while life remains in thee, that thou repose thy confidence only in the

death of Christ; trust in nothing else; commit thyself wholly to this death; cover thyself wholly with this alone, mix thyself wholly with this death; involve thyself wholly in this death. And, if the Lord will judge thee, say, Lord I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between myself and thy judgment; otherwise I will not engage in judgment with thee. And if he shall say to thee, that thou art a sinner, say, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my sins. If he shall say to thee, that thou hast deserved damnation, say, Lord, I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my evil deserts, and I offer his merits for that merit, which I ought to have had and have not; if he shall say, that he is angry with thee, say, Lord, I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and thy displeasure.

It cannot be doubted, but all this process would be mere formality in the hands of many persons, both pastors and people. But so, even at this day, are several the most spiritual catechisms, and the most evangelical exhortations. While the world is, as it is, depraved and sensual, the very best means of grace will be lost on very many. But it is not easy to conceive, that he who composed these directions, could himself have been a mere formalist. They breathe the spirit of one, who seems to have felt what it is to appear before the Majesty of God; and also, how unclean and defiled with sin both his nature and practice had been; and how unwise it is to rest on any thing but Christ crucified. The jewel of the Gospel, peace by the blood of Christ alone, which is the doctrine that gives law and being, order and efficacy to all the other doctrines of Christianity, is contained in this plain catechism; and the variety and repetition, which the author indulges, offensive as they are in the light of criticism, demonstrate the author's sincerity and zeal, and are the natural effect of the impression, which had been felt in his own conscience. For those alone, who have ploughed deep into the human heart; have been truly serious for eternity; have been well practised in self-examination, and are become well acquainted with their own demerits, are disposed to relish the peculiarities and the essentials of the Gospel. Let a man once know himself a sinner deserving destruction, and be truly desirous to become a new creature, and he will find that the Gospel of Christ is the only cordial that can console him. This cordial is here administered: and as it belongs to true penitents only, to the humble and the contrite, so is it administered by the skilful divine before us: or, in other words, that doctrine, which is "most wholesome and very full of comfort," namely, the doctrine of justification "before God, only for

the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith and not for our own works or deservings,"^a is preached by a bishop of the eleventh century. So strong was the provision made by the God of all grace for the preservation of evangelical truth in the darkest times. With happy inconsistency, Anselm, in seeking peace to his conscience, and in preaching peace to others, sees none of the manifold superstitious methods with which the papacy abounded, and which he himself professed. I suppose he would give some lower meaning to the doctrine of the merits of Saints, and the efficacy of pilgrimages; some meaning, which should not interfere with a simple application to Jesus Christ. And this was the method of many other pious spirits in those ages. The reader is desired to observe, however, that we have found the essential and leading doctrine of real Christianity in the possession of Anselm: and hence, we are at no loss to account for the superior piety and virtue, which rendered him the ornament of the times in which he lived, though they exempted him not from the common frailty of being seduced by the prejudices of education. The inestimable benefit of reading, and meditating on the divine word with prayer, may, from this example, be inferred. Such reading and meditation were the delight and employment of Anselm, through life; and he found the word of God a light to his feet, and a lantern to his paths.

Hence also it is not to be wondered at, that he should so seriously oppose the anti-trinitarian refinements of Roscellin. He, who finds relief to his own mind in the death of Christ, can never behold with indifference the attacks made on the dignity of Christ's person. And though, in that rude age, men had not, so commonly as in our times, learned to express a contempt for the Scriptures, yet there were those, who ridiculed and pretended to argue against their divine inspiration. The seal of Anselm, who lived for eternity, by faith in Christ, was induced to oppose these attempts, in a work entitled, "The Fool refuted."^b The ingenuity and acuteness of the archbishop were displayed with good effect in this treatise. It is proper to observe, also, that this great man was the real inventor of the argument, erroneously attributed to Descartes, which undertakes to prove the existence of God from the idea of infinite perfection, which is to be found, without exception in every man's mind.^c

Thus did Anselm employ himself in the defence of divine truth and serious religion. His knowledge of the Scriptures was, I am

persuaded, so sound, and his love of them so sincere, that if he had met with direct opposition, on these infinitely momentous subjects, from the Court of Rome, he would have sooner pronounced the pope to be Antichrist, than have parted with his evangelical sentiments and profession. But the course of events threw him into such circumstances, that it became the temporal interest of the court of Rome, to cherish and honour the archbishop.

Hear with what seriousness he expresses his views concerning his own justification before God. "I am conscious that I deserve damnation, and my repentance suffices not for satisfaction; but certain it is, that thy mercy abounds above all offences."

The works of this great prelate are partly scholastical, partly devotional. Taken together, they demonstrate him to have been eminently endowed with genius and piety. Like Augustine, whom he seems to have followed, as his model, he abounds both in profound argumentation on the most abstruse and difficult subjects, and in devout and fervent meditations on practical godliness. But it will not be so much adapted to the purpose of this history to analyze his tracts, as to give some detached passages on matters of real Christian importance.

In his treatise on the reason why God became man,^d he says, "I see that the man, whom we seek as qualified to be our Mediator, must be of this description; he must not die of necessity, because he must be omnipotent; nor of debt, because he must not be a sinner; and yet he must die voluntarily, because it was necessary, that he should do so, as Mediator."^e "As it is necessary, that man should satisfy for the sin of man, therefore none could make satisfaction, but he who was properly man, Adam himself, or one of his race. That Adam himself could satisfy was impossible."^f

He thus expresses his admiration, while he meditates on the power of the Cross.^g "O hidden fortitude! that a man hanging on the Cross should suspend eternal death, which oppressed mankind! that a man, nailed to the cross, should overcome the world, and punish its wicked powers with everlasting destruction. O secret powers! that a man condemned with robbers, should save men condemned with devils; that a man extended on a cross should draw all things to himself! O secret virtue! that one, expiring in agony, should draw innumerable souls from hell; that man should undertake the death of the body, and destroy the death of souls!"^h Speaking of the humiliation of Christ,ⁱ he observes, "He assumed poverty, yet lost not his riches; rich within, poor without.

^a See 11th Article of Religion.

^b Liber adversus Iudaeum. See Mac's translation of Mosheim, Vol. I. Cent. XI. p. 550. Quarto edition.

^c See 1d. p. 485.

^d Anselm's Meditations.

^e Cur Deus homo, Lib. 2. C. 11.

^f De Media reducta hum. C. 1.

^g 1d. C. 8.

^h On 2. Cor. vii.

God was latent in riches; man was apparent in poverty.—By that blood we have lost the rags of iniquity, that we might be clothed with the garment of immortality. Lest we should not dare with our poverty to approach him, who has all riches in his hand, he exhibited himself poor; that is, God condescended to take upon him our nature. That man might return to internal riches, God condescended to appear externally poor. We should have wanted at least one proof his tender love to us, unless he had taken upon him our poverty, and he himself had sustained, for a time, that indigence, from which he delivers us."

The reader, from these specimens, may form some idea of the felicity of thought, which enabled this prelate to unite practical devotion with scholastic theology, and to educe the most cogent motives to gratitude and pious affections from those mysterious doctrines, which have ever been esteemed, by wise and holy men, the special glory of Christianity.

The following thought seems to throw no small light on some of the most sublime ideas of Scripture. He has his eye on the first chapter to the Ephesians. "In the revelation of the mystery of our Lord's incarnation, the angels themselves received an advancement of dignity. Even their joy was increased, when they began to receive men into their fellowship. Christ indeed died not for angels; nevertheless, the fruits of his redemption, tend to their benefit. The enemy, which sin had caused between the angelic and human nature, is done away: and even from the redemption of men, the loss of the ancient angelic ruin is repaired. Thus heavenly and earthly things are renewed: those, however, only, who were in Christ elected and predestinated before the foundation of the world, obtain this benefit. For in him they always were and are, whom God hath chosen from eternity."

His views of the virtue and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ he thus expresses: "Christ was made sin for us, that is, a sacrifice for sin. For, in the law the sacrifices, which are offered for sins, are called sins. Hence Christ is called sin, because he was offered for sin.—He hath blotted out all sin, original and actual; hath fulfilled all righteousness, and opened the kingdom of heaven.—By one offering he perfects for ever: for, to the end of the world, that victim will be sufficient for the cleansing of all his people. If they sin a thousand times, they need no other Saviour, because this suffices for all things, and cleanses every conscience from sin." I need not say of a man so holy and upright, that he meant not to encourage sin, while he magnifies the sa-

voir of divine peace, through the blood of Christ, which his own conscience had experienced.

"Though all, who were to be saved, could not be present when Christ made that redemption, yet so great was the virtue of that death, that its effects are extended to those, who are absent or remote, in regard to place and time."

Hear how divinely he speaks of the Holy Spirit and his operations. "The Holy Spirit is evidently declared to be God,^a because, unless he were God, he would not have a temple. He breathed on them, and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost.¹ As if he had said: As ye perceive this breath,—by which I intimate to you the Holy Spirit, as spiritual objects are intimated by sensible things,—to proceed from my body, so know that the Holy Spirit proceeds from my person, even from the secret of my Deity." An interpretation worthy of him, who confuted the Greeks in the article of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son. Indeed every precious fundamental of Christianity appears in his writings. Remove the rubbish of superstition, and view the inward man; and you see in Anselm all that is vital and essential in godliness: Nor is he content with orthodoxy of sentiment: let us hear how he pants after God, and learn from him to apply, by prayer, for the power of the doctrine, which we profess.² "Draw me, Lord, into thy love. As thy creature, I am thine altogether; make me to be so in love. See, Lord, before thee is my heart: it struggles; but, of itself, it can effect nothing. Do thou, what it cannot do. Admit me into the secret chamber of thy love. I ask, I seek, I knock. Thou, who causest me to ask, cause me to receive: thou givest me to seek, give me to find. Thou teachest me to knock, open to me knocking. To whom dost thou give, if thou deniest him, who askest? Who finds, if he, that seeks, is disappointed? To whom dost thou open, if thou shuttest to him, that knocks? What dost thou give to him, who prays not, if thou deniest thy love to him who prays? From thee I have the desire; Oh, may I have the fruition! Stick close to him; stick close importunately, my soul." Let this suffice as a specimen of those groanings, which cannot be uttered,¹ of which the breast of Anselm was conscious, and which, in every age of the Church, have been known by the real people of God. These groanings are too much neglected even where they are not altogether condemned among men; but they are delightful in the ears of the heavenly host, and inferior only in harmony to the praises of just men made perfect.

^a B. II. Cur Deus homo. C. 16.

¹ De processu spiritus.

² Romans viii. 26.

^b On 1 Cor. vi.

^c De Magist. Cap. 7.

^a On 2 Cor. v.

^b Heb. x.

This holy pericope appears, from his comments on the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters to the Romans, to have understood the right use of the law and the Gospel; the power and pollution of indwelling sin; its augmentation in the heart from the irritation of the law which forbids evil; and the real and solid relief from guilt, by the grace of Jesus Christ. These subjects are well understood, that is, sufficiently for all practical purposes, even by persons, who have no pretensions to skill in languages or criticism; provided they have felt the lost condition of fallen man, and have been taught by the Spirit of God, in an effectual manner, to apply the medicine of the Gospel: whereas they are altogether hidden from the wise and prudent of this world; from men, who may possess much learning and acuteness, and who trust in the strength of their own knowledge and acquirements; but whose hearts have never been truly humbled, or opened to the reception of spiritual knowledge. The Apostle of the Gentiles was divinely commissioned to explain the important points; and, I find Anselm to have known them experimentally; but, let it suffice just to have mentioned these things in this place. They have been copiously illustrated by many writers since the Reformation. So various, however, and so abundant was the knowledge of Anselm in the divine life, that he wrote with no less precision on practical, than on mysterious subjects. Observe, for instance, how justly he describes the evil of rash judgment. "There are two cases, in which we ought to guard against rash judgment; first, when the intention of him, whom we are disposed to blame, is uncertain; secondly, when it is uncertain, how the person will turn out in THE END, who is the present object of censure. A person, for instance, refuses to fast, complaining of his bodily infirmities; if you, disbelieving him, impute his refusal to a spirit of intemperance, you are guilty of the sin of rash judgment. Moreover, though his gluttony be unquestionably evident, yet if you censure him, as if his recovery to holiness were impossible, you are guilty of censoriousness. Let us not then censure things, which are DUBIOUS, as if they were CERTAIN; nor reprehend even MANIFEST evils in such a manner, as to represent them absolutely INCURABLE. Of uncertain things those are most prone to judge rashly, who take more delight in inveighing against what is amiss, than in correcting it: and the vice of censoriousness itself may be traced up either to pride or to envy."

On the awful subject of predestination his views are similar to those of Augustine. Suffice it to quote a single sentence. "It cannot be investigated why God comes to

this man in the way of mercy, to that in the way of justice. For no creature can decide, why he hath mercy on this person, rather than on that."

In his comments on the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he beautifully illustrates the all-important doctrine of justification by faith in Christ; on which subject it may suffice to produce a single quotation from one of his systematical treatises. "If, as it is evident, the heavenly city must receive its complete number from the human race in addition to the angels, who fell not, and if this be impossible, without a satisfaction made to the divine justice, if God alone can make this satisfaction, if man is bound in justice to make it, it follows, that the Saviour must be God-man."—So clearly were the essentials of salvation discerned, in one of the darkest periods of the Church: and there is not an humble soul, in any age, who seeks out the works of the Lord with admiration and delight, but he will join with the pious archbishop in his meditation. "The wicked sinner, and the just is punished; the impious offend, and the pious is condemned; what the servant perpetrates, the master compensates; in fine, the evil which man commits, of that evil Christ endures the punishment." It would carry me too far to transcribe all his devout reflections and meditations on these subjects. One remark, however, which glances at the great corruption of doctrine, that originated from the mistaken philosophy of free-will, should not be omitted. "If natural possibility by free-will, as the wise of this world say, be sufficient unto salvation, both for knowledge and for practice, then Christ is dead in vain, and his cross is of none effect. But so surely as human salvation depends on the cross, so surely is that secular wisdom convicted of folly, which knows not the virtue of the cross, and substitutes a phantom of human merit and ability in its room."

"We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery," says St. Paul. The real doctrine of salvation needs, therefore, a stronger light than the world, weak and distempered in discernment as it is by sin, can endure. Hence it always appears foolish to the natural man. Are we to wonder, therefore, that men of secular wisdom should despise

• On Rom. xi.

• Cur Deus homo. B. 2. C. 6.

• B. Mediat.

• I have used the term FREE-WILL in this, and in some other places, in compliance with custom, though the expression leads to a confusion of ideas on the subject.—It is as absurd to talk of the freedom of the will, as of the freedom of liberty; for, we can have no other rational idea of freedom in men's actions, but that of their being VOLUNTARY.—If men act voluntarily, they act freely; responsibility is attached to what is voluntary, provided the subject be of sound understanding. When men do as they please, they are answerable for their conduct. This is a simple state of the case. See Locke's Essay on Hum. Und. and Edwards of Free-will.

• On 1 Cor. i.

• 1 Corin. i. 19

• Acts xvi. 14.

• On Rom. xiv.

it? That they should call the ideas of St. Paul, which Anselm illustrates, jejune, systematical, abstruse, unintelligible? that they should pronounce the Christian experience, which has those ideas for its basis, illusory, fantastical, and visionary? There have not been wanting, however, men of sound intellect and of solid learning, in every age, who have found the Gospel of Christ to be the power of God to salvation. Anselm was one of these. Amidst the gloom of superstition with which he was surrounded, he was yet enabled to describe, and vindicate every fundamental of evangelical doctrine: though a papist, he appeals to the Scriptures: he expounds them, by opening the plain, grammatical sense of St. Paul; and it behoves men, who call themselves protestants, or who boast of the superior light of this age, to confute his arguments, or at least to own that they do not believe the Scriptures to be divine. If original sin be a true doctrine, it is to be expected, that men leaning to their own understanding, would reject the doctrine of the remedy for a disease, which they will not feel. If the fever of pride have caused men to lose all sense of their fallen condition, ought their reasonings to be regarded by those, who feel what that condition is, and to what a state of misery sin has reduced them? If human powers, by the natural exertion of the will, exclusively of grace, be indeed sufficient to guide men into the way of salvation, then the principle of effectual grace, through the mediation of Christ, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit, is doubtless unnecessary. Let experience therefore decide by the fruits. Schemes and theories of doctrine, either wholly or partly subversive of all ideas of grace, have long been patronized by persons of great celebrity in the Christian world. What have these schemes and theories done for mankind? Who, among these philosophers, can be compared, I will not say with many protestant divines, but even with Anselm, who lived, under a cloud of superstitious disadvantages, in humility, sincerity, piety, charity, and heavenly-mindedness? It is allowed, even by his enemies, that his life was in the right: and all the true holiness of practice, which has appeared in the world, has ever originated from such doctrines as he professed. What has been the consequence of doctrines grafted on human merit and ability, but an inundation of vice and wickedness? We have lived, indeed, to see this consequence exhibited in full perfection in France. Since Christian ideas were almost exploded there, that country has been one vast theatre of all that is execrable among men. Even the military success of those infidels has only propagated misery; and their triumphs, like those of Satan, while they multiply the calamities of others, add only a fresh accumula-

tion to their own. Is it the same thing to forbid crimes, as to prevent them, ye innovators without discernment? Is it the same thing to despise the wisdom of antiquity, as to understand it, ye philosophers without learning?

To those then, who will not lend a patient ear to Christian doctrine, we say, it is divine; it has proved itself so to be in every age; the proofs of it lie open before you, examine, and confute if you can. And among these proofs we adduce one of no mean importance, namely, that the Gospel stands recommended as the medicine of our nature by its holy effects. However you may dislike it in its principles, you must own, if at all attentive to matter of fact, that it teaches men in real practice to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and that the farther men remove from its system in their views of religion, the more rampant do they grow in wickedness and immorality.

Reflections of this sort should teach men to inquire, with serious and humble reverence, both into the nature and evidences of Christianity; and persons who feel at all the force of these, or similar observations, will find it their duty to pray devoutly for the divine influences. In this spirit of devotion, Anselm excelled; and a few quotations, tending to illustrate it, shall close this article. There were some others in the eleventh century, who lived, and who wrote in a similar taste; but his eminent superiority over them all, will justify me in omitting the account of their works.*

He, who in the following manner, breathes out his soul in prayer, through the Intercessor and Mediator between God and man, and so seriously rejects the hope of any other advocate than the Son of God, could not really confide in the Virgin Mary, or any saint or angel, but must have rested in Christ alone,

* The innovators here alluded to, were continually, in words, forbidding crimes, and exhorting citizens to be orderly, &c.; while, in fact, they taught them to hate and despise the true preventives of crimes, viz. an effective government, a strong police, and, above all, the doctrine of the eternal punishments of the wicked.—All this time, the multiplication of the most flagitious enormities was forming a sea without a shore, which at length swallowed up the preachers themselves.—Such are the effects of chimerical philosophy, and of the contempt of ANCIENT wisdom!

* It may, perhaps, be not improper to mention Bruno, the founder of the severe order of Carthusians. He was born at Cologne, was chancellor of the diocese of Rheims and doctor of divinity there. He with two other canons prosecuted Manasses, archbishop of Cologne, for simony, in 1077. Manasses, in a rage, broke open and plundered the houses of the canons, and sold their prebends. He was, however, legally deposed. Bruno was offered the vacant archbishopric, but preferred a state of solitude. He is said, also, to have refused the archbishopric of Reggio. Notwithstanding the uncommon austerities of the order, which he instituted, he was obliged to attend Pope Urban II. formerly his scholar at Rheims. He was learned in Greek and Hebrew, and versed with the fathers, particularly Ambrose and Augustine; he followed the system of the latter, concerning graces, wrote on the Psalter and St. Paul's Epistles; and seems to have been unquestionably pious and heavenly-minded. See Butler, Vol. X.

however difficult it may be to explain the consistency of his sentiments with the fashionable superstitions of the times, the infection of which he by no means escaped entirely.

"Thus, Father Almighty, I implore thee, by the love of thy Almighty Son; bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to thy name: Free me from the bonds of sin; I ask this of thee by thy only co-eternal Son: and by the intercession of thy dearly beloved Son, who sitteth at thy right hand, graciously restore to life a wretch, over whom, through his own demerits, the sentence of death impends.—To what other intercessor I can have recourse, I know not, except to Him, who is the propitiation for our sins.⁷ That the only begotten Son should undertake to intercede for me, with the eternal Father, demonstrates him to be man; and that he should succeed in his intercession shews, that the human nature is taken into union with the majesty of the Deity."⁸

He addresses the Son of God as "the Redeemer of captives, the Saviour of the lost, the hope of exiles, the strength of the distressed, the enlarger of the enslaved spirit, the sweet solace, and refreshment of the mournful soul, the crown of conquerors, the only reward and joy of all the citizens of heaven, the copious source of all grace."⁹

The Holy Spirit he thus addresses in the same treatise. "Thee, Holy Spirit, I implore, if through my weakness, I have a very imperfect understanding of the truth of thy majesty, and if, through the concupiscence of sinful nature, I have neglected to obey

the Lord's precepts when understood,—that thou wouldst condescend to enlighten me with thy visitation,—that through thee, whom I have called upon as my succour, in the dangerous ocean of life, I may, without shipwreck, arrive at the shore of a blessed immortality."

Could the pious spirit, who believes and longs for the rest, which remains for the people of God, express its most ardent breathings in language more adapted to her frame than the following? "Hasten the time, my Saviour and my God, when, what I now believe, I may see with eyes uncovered; what I now hope and reverence at a distance, I may apprehend; what I now desire, according to the measure of my strength, I may affectionately embrace in the arms of my soul, and that I may be wholly absorbed in the abyss of thy love!"¹⁰

After having uttered many petitions,¹¹ he says, "I have asked many good things, my Creator, though I have deserved many evils. Not only I have no claim on thee for these good things, but I have merited exquisite punishments. But the case of publicans, harlots, and robbers, in a moment snatched from the jaws of the enemy, and received in the bosom of the Shepherd, animates my soul with a cheering hope." With so intuitive a glance of Christian faith does he console his soul!—It is in the same way that divine mercy is apprehended by all humble and penitent spirits. The person of Christ, and the doctrine of justification by him alone, are the objects and supports of confidence in God.

CENTURY XII.

CHAPTER I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE LIFE OF BERNARD.

A GREAT luminary strikes our attention at the entrance of this century—the famous Bernard, abbot of Clairval. As the general scene of our history still continues dark and gloomy, let us stick close to the splendid object. At least I would wish to exhibit a just estimate of the life, character, and writings of this renowned saint. For the subject may not only throw a considerable light on the religion and manners of this century, but will also illustrate that connection between Christian doctrine and practice, which it is

the principal design of this work to explore from age to age.

There was a time when Bernard was idolized: his word was a law, while he lived, throughout Europe; and, for ages after his death, he was scarce thought to have been capable either of fault or mistake. But the public taste has long since deviated into the other extreme, and it will behove me to say a few words, with a view to combat that power of prejudice, by which most minds are apt to be carried down the torrent of fashion.

Bernard was doubtless a very ardent champion of the popes of Rome—I mean, of their office, not of their personal characters. He

⁷ De Vestiment.

⁸ Chap. viii. Rom.

⁹ Spec. Sermo Evang. C. 19.

¹⁰ Id. Chap. 18.

¹¹ Id. Medit.

inveighed against the vices of the men, and the various evils of their ecclesiastical administration. But he supported their pretensions to the chair of St. Peter, and opposed with vehemence all who withstood those pretensions. **FORGIVE HIM THIS WRONG**: it was common to him with the Christian world; and the German monk, who, four hundred years after, could see at length, though by slow degrees, the wickedness and folly of the whole established system, under which he had been strictly educated; has ever been looked on as a prodigy.

In superstition also, Bernard was unhappily involved all his days; it was the evil of the times. His austerities have, with nauseous punctuality, been recited by his panegyrist.^a They might have spared their accounts, as they themselves confess that he afterwards owned he was in an error, both in injuring his own health, and in exacting too much of labour and sufferings from his disciples. Nor is the sincerity of Bernard to be doubted, either in his juvenile zeal, or in his candid and frank confession of his faults.^c He even accused himself of sacrilege, because, by his indiscreet excesses, he had rendered himself almost unfit to serve God and the Church. And though the weakness of his frame continued till death, as the consequence of the injuries, which his body had received by his austerities, he seems to have taken some care of health in the latter part of his life.

But the strongest prejudices, which we are inclined to admit against him in our times, are derived from his supposed miracles, and from his real attachment to the cause of the Crusades.

In truth, I was disgusted with the tedious perusal of his miracles, with not one of which do I mean to trouble the reader. But Bernard was canonized: it was therefore necessary, by the etiquette of the Roman See, that a Saint should work miracles; and no wonder, when the interests of all parties concerned were favourable to fraud, and when credulity was a general evil, that miracles should be feigned, be circumstantially related, and be implicitly believed. Thus Ignatius, the father of the Jesuits, was said, sixty years after his death, to have wrought miracles; though in his life, published fifteen years after that event, no mention is made of any. Our King Henry III. was reported to have wrought a miracle after his death, at his tomb. He, also, might have been added to the Roman Calendar, if the imposture had not been detected and exposed by the vigour and sagacity of his son Edward I.^d Let Bernard, then, be acquitted

of all blame on this head, though his panegyrist, it must be owned, have written as absurdly concerning him, as if they had intended to disgrace his character.

Of the Crusades, the question concerning their policy, is not the same thing as concerning their justice. In the beginning of this century, prodigious armies marched out of Europe, to take possession of the Holy Land; and, notwithstanding the repeated calamities which attended their progress, the princes of the west still persevered in the attempt. That they should single out Palestine as the scene of their military exploits was fanatical and superstitious. The great inconveniences to which they were inevitably exposed, on account of the immense distances from their respective countries, and the want of all political and prudential wisdom in their plans, are evident; and, in the event, Europe suffered the punishment of their temerity and folly. Add to this, that the improvident waste of so much human blood on so fantastic an object, and the mixture of profane wickedness with absurd superstition in the Crusaders, render their characters, on the whole, as reprehensible as they were ridiculous. But when the precise question is asked, Whether they had a just cause against the Mahometans, I cannot decide, with the generality of modern historians, against them. Perhaps we have too hastily admitted the truth of the accounts, which infidel writers, of no very accurate information, have given of the virtues of the Arabians. It is very evident, that in the wars between them and the Christians, the rules of justice and humanity were more frequently and more atrociously violated by the former than by the latter. Even the very degenerate Christianity, which had then for ages obtained, produced a degree of social virtue unknown to the followers of Mahomet. A savage pride, a sanguinary malice, and a shameless perfidy marked, with very few exceptions, the general conduct of men, whom Voltaire, with insidious candour, prefers to their Christian adversaries. It should be remembered, that the Mahometans from the first publication of the Koran, asserted a divine claim to universal empire; and, in their creed, unbelieving nations are continually threatened with the loss of their religion, their lives, or at least their liberties. In the eleventh century the Turks, the successors of the Arabians, both in regard to their empire and their religion, had, in less than thirty years, subdued Asia, as far as the Hellespont.^e Yet the same author, who gives us this information, says, the charge alleged against the Mahometans, of looking on it as a duty to extirpate all religions by the sword, is confuted by the Koran, by the

^a These are several; the Lives of Bernard, which they wrote, are at the close of the 2d Vol. of his Works; which are in two folios. I use the Parisian edition of Mabilion.

^c Vol. II. p. 108 f.

^d Fox B. of Martyrs, Vol. I. 390.

^e Gibbon's Decline, C. 58. V. 6. by Google

history of the Mussulman conquerors, and by the toleration of Christian worship. This observation seems scarce consistent with the former. To live in slavery, under the Mahometan yoke, was all the indulgence granted to the Christians, who sunk beneath their arms; and as they realized this doctrine at one time, even to the straits of Gibraltar, as the pilgrims to the Holy Land were exposed to many insults, robberies, and extortions, as both Saracens and Turks acted, from age to age, on the maxims of original Mahometanism, and as, at length, for want of a proper union of the European princes, in stemming the torrent, they desolated a great part of Europe itself, it seems agreeable to the law of nations, to conclude, that the Christian powers had a right to resist their ambitious pretensions. If this state of the case be just, it is sufficient to vindicate Bernard from the charge of iniquity, in encouraging and promoting the Crusades. This is enough for my purpose: he might, and he, doubtless, did mean well in his exhortations on this head; and it is only to be wished that the enterprises of the Christian princes had been conducted on the plan of defensive prudence, rather than of offensive military enthusiasm. I am not, however, called on to vindicate Bernard as a politician, but as a Christian.

Bernard was born at Fontaine, a village of Burgundy, in the year 1091; and was the son of Tecelinus,^a a military nobleman, renowned for piety, at least according to the ideas of religion prevalent at that time. The same character is given of his mother Aleth. She had seven children by her husband, of whom Bernard was the third. From his infancy he was devoted to religion and study, and made a rapid proficiency in the learning of the times. He took an early resolution to retire from the world, and engaged all his brothers and several of his friends in the same monastic views with himself. The most rigid rules were agreeable to his inclination: and, hence, he became a Cistercian, the strictest of the orders in France. The Cistercians were at that time but few in number: men were discouraged from uniting with them on account of their excessive austerities. Bernard, however, by his superior genius, his eminent piety, and his ardent zeal, gave to this order a lustre and a celebrity, which their institution by no means deserved. At the age of twenty-three, with more than thirty companions, he entered into the monastery. Other houses of the order arose soon after, and he himself was appointed abbot of Clairval.^b To those novitiates, who desired admission, he used to say, "If ye hasten to these things, which are within, dismiss your bodies, which ye

brought from the world; let the spirits alone enter; the flesh profiteth nothing." Strange advice this may seem, and very different from the meekness and facility, which our Saviour exhibited toward young disciples.^c Nor would it be worth while to have mentioned it at all, but that it evinces the extreme disadvantages, which then attended the pursuit of religious knowledge, and the cultivation of piety. Yet, amidst all these disagreeable austerities, the soul of Bernard was inwardly taught of God; and, as he grew in the divine life, he gradually learned to correct the harshness and asperity of his sentiments. Finding the novitiates to be terrified at his severe declarations, he used to preach to them the mortification of carnal concupiscence, and lead them on with a mildness and clemency, which, however, he did not exercise toward himself. He injured his health exceedingly by austerities, and, as he afterwards confessed, threw a stumbling block in the way of the weak, by exacting of them a degree of perfection, which he himself had not attained. He had indeed all his brethren to follow his example of retirement. They were five in number; and his only sister still remained in the world, who, coming to visit the brethren in the monastery, in the dress and with the attendance of a lady of quality, found herself treated with such neglect, that bursting into tears, she said, "though I am a sinner, nevertheless, for such Christ died." Bernard, moved with an expression so truly evangelical, remitted his severity, gave her directions suited to the taste of the age, and, probably, still better advice. But of that the miserable writer, whom I follow, says nothing. External austerities are, as it were, the whole of his theology, and having told us, that Bernard's sister became a nun, and resembled her brothers in piety, he dismisses her from his narrative.^d

Bernard, however, having reduced himself to the greatest weakness, by his absurd excesses, and being obliged to take more care of his health, was humbled under a sense of his folly, and frankly confessed it, in the strongest terms.^e He recovered his strength, and began to exert himself, by preaching, and travelling from place to place, for the real good of mankind. It is wonderful to observe, with what authority he reigned in the hearts of men of all ranks, and how his word became a law to princes, and nobles. His eloquence, indeed, was very great: but that alone could never have given him so extensive a dominion. His sincerity and humility were eminent, and his constant refusal of the highest ecclesiastical dignities, for which he was, doubtless, as well qualified as any person of his time, gave, in his de-

^a Life of Bernard by Guhelinus, 1977.
Life of Bernard, 1083.

^b Matthew xiv. 9. ^c Id. 1090. ^d Id. 1094.

circumstances, an unequivocal testimony to the uprightness of his character: I say,—in his circumstances,—for I would by no means insinuate, that the acceptance of the highest ecclesiastical dignities manifests, in all cases, a spirit of avarice or ambition. The bishops of Genoa, Milan, and Rheims, were among those which he refused to accept.

During a schism, which happened in the Church of Rome, the authority of Bernard determined both Lewis VI. king of France, and Henry I. king of England, to support the claims of Innocent II. This is one instance, among many, of his influence, which was employed, in various negotiations, for the good of the Church, as he thought; but of which the detail is very foreign to the views of this history.

That, which eminently marked the character of Bernard, amidst the profusion of honours heaped on his character throughout Europe, was his undissembled humility. Though no potentate, whether civil or ecclesiastical, possessed such real power as he did, in the Christian world, and though he was the highest in the judgment of all men, he was nevertheless, in his own estimation, the lowest. He said, and he felt what he said; namely, that he had neither the will nor the power to perform the services, for which he was so much extolled, but was wholly indebted to the influence of divine grace. At intervals, from the employments of ecclesiastical affairs, he meditated on the subject of the Book of Canticles. The love of Christ toward his Church, his great condescension towards it, though sullied and dishonoured by sin, the reciprocal affection also of the Church toward the divine Saviour, the prelibations of his love afforded toward her, varied however with anxieties and interruptions, these subjects engaged his attention, and he wrote on them in that manner, which experience only can dictate.*

Another writer of Bernard's life tells us,* of the excellent dignitaries of the Church, who had received their education in the monastery of Clairval. But as I know nothing of any of them, except one, it must suffice to mention him, pope Eugenius III. From a monk, he rose to that height of ecclesiastical dignity; and he still practised the austerities of the convent, so far as his exalted station admitted; and we have yet extant five books, addressed to him by Bernard, written with that air of genuine piety and sincerity, which shewed that the abbot was no respecter of persons. The pope himself was irreproachable in his manners, continued to reverence the abbot, was zealous toward God, and appears to have far excelled the generosity of popes. For the worst thing that can be said of Eugenius was, that he seems to have had

no scruples in accepting the popedom. But it is not for man to say, how great a quantity of ignorance and superstition is compatible with the existence of genuine piety. Eugenius was raised to the pontificate in the year 1145, and governed nine years, in a state of splendid misery. For feuds and factions convulsed his government; and he was obliged to fly from Rome into France, to avoid the fury of his enemies. It was probably a blessing in the disguise of afflictions, that he was never allowed to taste the sweets of power and grandeur.

Theobald, count of Blois, elder brother to Stephen king of England, was also much guided by the counsels of Bernard, and he was surely a very extraordinary character. Though a powerful prince, he lived in abstemiousness, simplicity, and plainness. Nothing indecent was permitted to be said or done in his presence. His care and munificence in relieving the afflicted was wonderful; in a famine he opened his store-houses to the poor: his life, in short, was devoted to the service of mankind; and I hope it was true what Ernald tells us, that he laid up treasures above. But we must be content with details of external things from a writer, who gives no account of the inward vital godliness of his heroes. Theobald also had his share of afflictions, though the account of their nature and of his relief from them at last, is beyond measure obscure.

The talents of Bernard in preaching, were, doubtless, of the first order. He possessed that variety of gifts, which fitted him either to address the great or the vulgar. He knew how to improve conversation to salutary purposes, and to over-rule the frivolous trifling of a company by introducing something serious, which yet was of an inviting and agreeable nature. At the command of the pope, and at the request of other bishops, he was wont to preach in various places; and the impressions left on the congregations, who crowded from all parts to hear him, demonstrated the powers of his eloquence.†

The Crusade of Lewis VII. called the younger, was supported by the eloquent voice of Bernard, who unhappily prevailed to draw numbers to join that monarch in his absurd expedition, which was in its consequences, pregnant with misery and ruin.‡ If we had no other apologies for Bernard, than those very absurd ones suggested by Gaufrid, it must be confessed, he would be totally inexcusable. But, in the review of his works, we shall have occasion to hear the abbot speak for himself.

* Id. 1123.

† Id. 1157.

‡ Life of Bernard, by Gaufrid.

* Id. 1123.

• 1127. Life of Bernard, by Ernald.

CHAPTER II.

BERNARD'S DEFENCE OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH
AGAINST ABELARD.

THE merits of the controversy between these two great men, can scarce be appreciated, without some previous review of the life and transactions of the latter. Peter Abelard was born in Brittany, in the year 1079.* He was, doubtless, a man of genius, industry, and learning. In early life, he was put under the tuition of Roscelin, an acute logician, already mentioned, who, incorporating his philosophical subtleties with Christian ideas, departed from the simplicity of the faith, and was condemned for tritheism, toward the close of the foregoing century.

Abelard needed not the instructions of such a master, in order to learn the arts of self-sufficiency. Confident and presumptuous by nature, elated with applause, and far too haughty to submit to the simple truth, as it is revealed in Scripture, he was, from the moment that he applied himself to the study of the sacred writings, ardently disposed to embrace heretical singularities. After he had appeared in a very splendid light in the schools of philosophy, and had been equally distinguished by his acuteness and by his contentious spirit, he attended the lectures of Anselm† in divinity. What sort of lectures they were, we are not told, but I have not the worse opinion of them from the supercilious contempt with which Abelard spake of them. He himself had given very little attention to the sacred books, and yet very speedily decided against his teacher, pronounced him void of reason and common sense, and declared, that, with the assistance of an easy expositor, the Scriptures were perfectly intelligible to any one, who had the smallest pretensions to literature. "Are you equal to the work of expounding the Scriptures?" said his companions. "I am ready," said he: "choose any book; which you please, from the Old or New Testament, and allow me a single commentator." They instantly fixed on the most difficult of all the prophets, Ezekiel. He studied that night, and next morning declared, that he was prepared to expound the prophet: "for it is not by leisure," said he, "but by energy of genius, that I undertake to master the sciences." He exhibited himself in public, lectured repeatedly on Eze-

kiel, and was admired by his ignorant auditors.

Hitherto every thing seems to be a modern scene. The same juvenile confidence, supported by the same ignorance of themselves and the same depraved nature, has formed many Socinian and Pelagian preachers and writers in our times, who, between the age of twenty and thirty, have despised the wisdom of antiquity, and the authority of men most justly renowned for good sense, learning, and holiness, and have committed themselves to the direction of plausible and presumptuous innovators, who are often sufficiently artful in beguiling the unwary. One of their most successful devices, is, they pretend to teach young students of divinity how to think for themselves. It is remarkable, however, that we very seldom find any of those, who have gone to visit the sick lion, to return from his den. A self-confident spirit naturally leads the mind into opinions the most daringly subversive of the Gospel, as well as into a course of life the most opposite to its precepts. And when a man has begun to despise the influence of the Holy Spirit, he is awfully left at large to his own dark designs, and to the crafts of the prince of darkness. The connection between doctrines and practice is close and exact. He, who thought highly of himself, was easily disposed to think meanly of divine grace; and the best uses of the story of this miserable man are these,—to teach youth to be modest,—and to inform mankind, whether young or old, that the Scriptures should ever be studied with reverence, humility, and prayer.

Abelard had the baseness to seduce a young woman, named Eloise, who was brought up in Paris by her uncle. The names of both these persons are familiar to those who have read our poet Pope, and it would be far remote from the plan of this history, to enlarge on scenes of so flagitious a nature. The real principles of grace, I constantly find, are alone productive of holy practice. He, who has not seen the evil of sin in his own nature, and the preciousness of the grace of Christ, even while he boasts of his regard to moral virtue, will play with iniquity, and call evil good, and good evil. The unhappy woman herself learned to glory in her shame, and professed that she thought it an honour to become the harlot of so renowned a person as Abelard. Sin deceives and hardens the heart incredibly; even holy David, for a season, felt its fascinating power, and nothing less than the influence of divine grace can subdue it. Blinded by lust, Abelard and Eloise felt no remorse for their monstrous treatment of her uncle, whose confidence they abused, and whose kindness they repaid with the most vile and wicked ingratitude. In the mean time, Abelard

* I have been obliged to Mr. Berington's history of this man, for the arrangement of certain facts and circumstances. I scarce need to say, that I am constrained to differ, *totò cælo*, from him in sentiments. Nor is it possible, that it should be otherwise, where two persons have scarce one common principle of theology, in which they agree.

† This person must not be confounded with the famous archbishop of Canterbury of that name.

studied and expounded the prophets, and continued to preach, not the Lord, but himself, as he had ever done. Happy had it been for the Christian world, if there had been no more such theologians. But thus it is with men, who speculate on religion at their ease, and make it a vehicle for their own advancement, honour, and wealth. With shameless versatility, they can at one time undertake to explain the Scriptures, at another gratify the lusts of the flesh. With men truly serious for their own souls it is not so: they may be slow in their advances in Christian science; but their steps are safe; and, while religion is by them brought to the test of experience, their conduct is preserved in uprightness.

I throw a veil over the particulars of the shameful story. Suffice it to say, that, in the issue, Abelard's projects of ecclesiastical ambition were disappointed, and that both he and the unhappy woman retired into monastic obscurity.

Ambition and the force of an active genius soon engaged Abelard again in theological inquiries. Of all the ancient fathers, Origen most suited his taste; and, mindful of the instructions of Roscelin, he began to philosophize in public on the doctrines of the Gospel, and composed, in three books, his *Introduction to Theology*; in which he attempted to render the mysteries of Christianity more agreeable to reason, than they had been represented by the ancient fathers. The Trinity, in particular, he describes as a doctrine known to the ancient schools of philosophers, and revealed to them, in recompense of their virtues. This is certainly a language very different from that of, the Scriptures, which never mention philosophers, except with a view to guard against their seductions, and always represent their views as extremely abhorrent from the doctrines of the Gospel. The modern historian of Abelard is large and diffuse in describing the treatment which his hero met with, but desultory and indistinct in the account which he gives of his real sentiments. He asserts, however, that Abelard was persecuted without cause; that his book really contained nothing that was expressly heterodox; and, while he positively and decidedly condemns the conduct of his adversaries, he gives his readers no sufficient data, by which they may judge for themselves. But thus it is, that heresy has ever been defended. While its words do eat as a canker, and gradually pervert the minds of the unwary, every charitable attempt to counteract the poison is treated as bigotry, illiberality, and fanaticism. The praise of good sense and sound argument is considered as appropriate to the heretic. He, at least, is allowed and encouraged to spread his doctrines with freedom, and to asperse the orthodox with the keenest

invective; while all, who undertake to defend the plain sense of Scripture, are stigmatized as persecutors. Scenes of this nature, have, to the disgrace of human nature, been renewed from age to age: and so low and mean are the ideas of charity inculcated by those, who call themselves liberal, that the real spiritual benefit of thousands seems to them scarce an object of any magnitude, compared with the personal reputation of the applauded heretic.

Let us then endeavour to give, from the best evidences, a distinct view of the leading sentiments of Abelard, that we may be enabled to form a just idea of the controversy, which at present engages our attention. I have drawn them from the history of Alexander Natalis; and the testimonies both of Abelard himself, and of Bernard his opponent, are introduced into this account.

1. Abelard distinguished the persons of the Trinity in this manner. He described God the father to be **FULL POWER**, the Son to be a **CERTAIN POWER**, the Holy Spirit to be **NO POWER**. He said, "the Son was to the Father as a **CERTAIN POWER** to power, as species to genus, as **materiatum** to **materia**, as man to an animal, as a brazen seal to brass."

I suppose, were I to translate the Latin words of this passage, for the sake of the less learned reader, I should make no addition to his stock of knowledge.

2. He represented the Holy Spirit to have proceeded from the Father and the Son, but not from the substance of the Father and the Son. Let this article pass as an unintelligible subtilty, if the reader please. The next speaks plainly a sentiment, which strikes at the root of Christianity.

3. He denied that the devil ever had any legal authority over man, and therefore, he denied that the Son assumed flesh, for the sake of freeing man from the devil. God appeared, said he, in flesh, for no other end, than for our instruction by word and example, nor did he suffer and die for any other reason, than to show and recommend his love towards us. I scarce need to say, that this is the very essence of Socinianism.

That I have not mistaken the meaning of Abelard, will farther appear from a view of his reasonings against the doctrine of atonement. "How is it possible, that God should be reconciled to us by the death of his Son, since, in all reason, he ought to have been more incensed against men for the murder of his Son, than for the violation of his precept by the eating of a single apple? If Adam's sin could not be expiated but by the death of Christ, what expiation could be made for the horrid crime of murdering Christ himself? Could the death of an innocent Son be so pleasing to God, that he

would be reconciled to us men on the commission of it?—Who does not see, that it is cruel and unjust, that any one should require the blood of the innocent? How much less could God be so pleased with such an action, as to be reconciled on account of it to the whole world?" Thus far Abelard.* Socinians have never said any thing more specious. To those, who know how to reverence divine wisdom, and to submit to the express word of God, such reasonings will appear unworthy of an answer. What I am concerned for at present is, to state the fact, that Abelard was an Heretic, that Bernard did not accuse him either unjustly or precipitately, and that the assertion of the historian of Abelard,† namely, that his hero "was not guilty of a single error," is altogether unfounded.

It may be proper to add, that Abelard, having set aside the Scripture-doctrine of an atonement, gives it as his opinion, that the real cause and design of Christ's incarnation was, that he might illuminate the world with the light of his wisdom, and inflame it to the love of God.

4. He affirmed, that the Holy Spirit was the soul of the world. A phrase much used by the philosophers.

5. He asserted, that Christ, God and man, is not a third person in the Trinity, and that God is not properly to be called man.

6. That by freewill, without the help of grace, we can both will and perform that which is good, in direct contradiction to the seventh chapter to the Romans.

7. That in the sacrifice of the altar, there remains, in the air, the form of the former substance.

8. That not the fault but the penalty of original sin is derived from Adam.

9. That there is no sin, except in the full consent of the man, and that consent attended with or implying a contempt of God.

10. That no sin is committed by concupiscence, inward delight in evil, or ignorance. However obscurely he expresses himself, he evidently lessens the demerit of sinful thoughts.

11. That diabolical suggestions are made, in a natural way on men, by the contact of stones and herbs, as the sagacious malice of evil spirits knows how to suit the various efficacy of these things to the production of various vices.

12. Faith, he called an estimation or opinion of things not seen. "As if," says Bernard, "a man might think and speak, in matters of faith, what he pleases, or, as if

the Sacraments of our faith were not sure and certain in their nature. The Spirit itself bore witness with our spirits, that we are children of God. The whole object of faith is divinely confirmed by prophecies and miracles, established and consecrated by the incarnation, bloody death, and glorious resurrection of the Redeemer. How can any man give to so divine a principle as the faith of the Gospel, so low and mean a title as an opinion, except one, who hath not received the Holy Spirit, or, who is ignorant of the Gospel, or, who looks on it as a fable?" The difference between divine and human faith in the Christian religion is here not improperly stated by Bernard.

13. In commenting on the epistle to the Romans, Abelard thus expresses himself. "Since the divine compassion, by bare intuition, could have freed man from the devil, what necessity, what reason, or what need was there, that, for our redemption, the Son of God should assume our nature, should sustain so many and so great miseries, and the painful and ignominious death of the Cross? To us the reason seems to be as follows,—that our justification by his blood and our reconciliation to God, consisted in this singular grace exhibited to us, namely, in his taking upon him our nature, and in his persevering by word and example, even to death, instructing us."

Thus he drew his true disciples the more closely to himself by love. Our redemption, therefore, consists in that great love excited in us by the passion of Christ, which not only frees us from the servitude of sin, but gives us the liberty of the sons of God."

In another place, he says, "Though our doctors, since the days of the Apostles, are of different sentiments, I think the devil had no legal power over man, except a permissive power from God, as a gaoler; nor did the Son of God assume flesh, that he might free men from slavery."

14. He asserts, that fresh continued influences of divine grace are not necessary to the production of every single good action, contrary to the plain sense of the parable of the vine and its branches, and our Lord's own explication of it in John xv.

I might add also another sentiment of Abelard, namely, "that God does no more for him, who is saved, than for him, who is not saved." He argues, that "if man be naturally more prone to evil than to good, his sin

* Bern. Vol. I. 647.

† History of Abelard and Eloise, p. 278.

† I anticipate the sentiments of Bernard in this place: more of his arguments against Abelard will be given, when we come to the account of his opposition to the heretic.

* Observe how the idea of atonement is excluded, to make way for that of instruction, while evangelical terms are still used. Some of the other articles are sagacious or obscure: this is palpably plain,—and of essential importance in the controversy.—In the same light the opposition, which he makes, in a great degree, to the work of the Holy Spirit, is to be considered.

† He plainly misrepresents the ancient doctors: some of whom assign any other sort of power to Satan: but, by this misrepresentation, he speciously introduces his opposition to the doctrine of the atonement.

merit no blame; nay, that "God himself seems blameable for making him so weak and frail." Humble and intelligent Christians know how to answer: "nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" And, moreover, they will, with great truth, contend, that such men as Abelard ought not to complain, that the character of humble and sincere Christians is denied to them, and that their invectives against their opponents, are not only unfounded, but also prove themselves to be void of integrity and candour, because they endeavour to impose on mankind by pretending to be what they are not.

On the whole, it seems impossible, that a man, who had known any thing of the power of native depravity, should have advanced such sentiments as Abelard published to the world. Still, if he had kept his thoughts to himself, or had even been a modest inquirer, and proposed his doubts for the sake of information from persons better versed than himself in theological inquiries, his sentiments would have been no proper object of an ecclesiastical council. But Abelard had proceeded to assume the character of a teacher; and what fundamental doctrine of Christianity had he not opposed? The views of the Trinity had been either perverted under his hands, or confounded with the speculations of philosophers. The atonement of Christ, on which alone the hope and comfort of real Christians, in all ages, depends, had, in effect, been denied: the efficacious influence of divine grace had been asserted to be, in many cases at least, unnecessary; and the fallen state of man by nature had been excluded from his creed. If he had renounced the Christian name, at the same time that he renounced the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, he would have merited the character of an honest man; and, by separating himself from Christian society, would have prevented the weak and the unwary from being imposed on by his notions. But such candour and frankness seldom belong to the character of heretics: strict truth and plain dealing in religious matters are scarcely to be expected from any but those, who are humble before God, and sanctified by his truth. Why Abelard chose still to call himself a Christian is obvious; his schools would have been deserted, if he had acted openly and honestly. Unless then it can be proved, that there are no fundamental truths of Scripture, or, that all sentiments are equally insignificant, it behoved the rulers of the Church, from every principle of piety and charity, to take cognizance of the growing heresy.

A council was called at Soissons, and Abelard was summoned to appear. He was charged with tritheism, and with having as-

serted, that God the Father was alone Almighty. He was ordered to burn his volumes, and to resist the symbol of Athanasius. He obeyed both the mandates, and, after a short confinement, was set at liberty. I am not disposed to approve of all the steps taken by this council. I only maintain, that the principle of their proceedings was just and equitable. Every person, who is a member of any society, religious or civil, would own, if a similar occasion presented itself, that he had a right to require the treacherous member, who had laboured to subvert that society, either publicly to retract his sentiments, or to submit to a decree of expulsion.

But Abelard, in his own account of the transaction, largely descants on the iniquity and imperiousness of the Synod. The acrimonious invective, the airs of triumph on occasion of little advantages gained by himself in the course of the debate, the shrewdness of his cavils, and, above all, the dextrous evasion of the main points on which the controversy rests, these things appear on the face of his narrative, and are so exactly similar to the conduct of modern heretics, much better known to the world, that I may well be spared the recital of them. Moreover, want of sincerity as well as of temper, are so evident in the narrative of Abelard, that his authority is rendered defective; and so much so, that we can lay no decisive stress on his testimony in things, with which his own character is concerned. Indeed the want of honesty and veracity appears to have been most striking features in this ingenious and learned disputant.

A commentary on the Epistle to the Romans was also published by Abelard, to which, in an introductory preface, he has prefixed an observation on the comparative value of the Gospels and the Epistles, "The former, he thinks, are designed to teach those things, which every Christian ought to know; the latter, to inculcate a strict attention and obedience to them; these last," says he, "contain some wholesome documents and advice, which though they appertain not to the essence of belief, may serve to embellish the Christian establishment, and to develope its tenets." This is the method of speaking, usual with Socinians, namely, to undervalue the authority of some parts of Scripture, compared with others, as if holy men of God did not speak, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, with equal authority through the whole of the sacred volume. It is not necessary to give any other account of the commentary than that, which the reader may conjecture for himself from the view already stated of the leading sentiments of the author.

Bernard, paying a visit to the nunnery of the Paraclete, over which Eloisa presided,

was heard from the pulpit by the abbess and her nuns, with admiration. He read and approved of their laws and institutes, which had been drawn up by Abelard. He objected only to one phrase in their repetition of the Lord's prayer. For the common expression DAILY, in the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," they had been taught to say, supersubstantial bread. Abelard, it seems, had literally followed the etymology of the Greek word;⁴ seduced, I suppose, by the Aristotelian chimeras, which relate to substance. The plain mind of Bernard, attending to sense and utility, rather than to sound and glitter, revolted against the innovation; and, while he spoke with a respectful deference of the man, and commended every thing else relating to the nunnery, he expressed his disapprobation of the unusual term. When Abelard heard of it, his pride took fire; he wrote to Bernard a warm expostulation, and, by undertaking to shew the superior authority of St. Matthew to St. Luke, he endeavoured to support the propriety of the term supersubstantial. Here again appeared the Socinian mode of undervaluing one part of Scripture, in comparison of another.—This is the first instance recorded of an open altercation between Bernard and Abelard. For I find, at least, no decisive proof of any opposition made, as yet, by the former to the publications of the latter. On the contrary, Bernard was hitherto far from being clear in his own judgment, concerning the real theological character of Abelard; and of his caution and charity we shall presently see abundant proofs. The little story which has been told, is trifling in its own nature, if any thing can be called trifling, which illustrates the human character, and displays the connection between doctrine and disposition, which was never more apparently exhibited than in the transactions of Abelard.

The council of Soissons had been held in the year 1121. It was a long time after this, that Bernard took any particular notice of Abelard. Either he had heard little of the controversy, or had not thought himself called on to deliver his sentiments. Abelard, however, notwithstanding his retractions, persevered in teaching his heresies; and it became, at length, impossible for his errors to escape the observation of the abbot of Clairval.

About the year 1139,⁵ William, abbot of St. Thierry, alarmed at the growing progress of Abelard's doctrine, wrote to Geoffry, bishop of Chartres, and to Bernard, intreating them to undertake the defence of divine truth. "God knows I am confounded," said he, "when I, who am 'no man,' am compelled to address, on a subject of urgent

importance, you and others, whose duty it was to speak, though hitherto ye have been silent." For when I see the faith of our common hope to be grievously and dangerously corrupted, without resistance, and without contradiction, the faith, which Christ hath consecrated for us with his blood, for which Apostles and martyrs contended even to death, which holy teachers defended with much labour and fatigue, and which they transmitted entire and uncorrupt to these dregs of time, I feel a distress which constrains me to speak for that faith, for which I could wish to die, if it were necessary. They are no small objects which I lay before you: the faith of the Holy Trinity, the person of the Mediator, the Holy Spirit, the grace of God, the sacrament of our common redemption, are the subjects which engage my attention. For Peter Abelard again teaches and writes novelties: his books cross the seas, and pass over the Alps; and his new sentiments concerning the faith are carried into provinces and kingdoms, are preached to crowded audiences, and are openly defended; they are even said to have made their way into the court of Rome. I say to you both, your silence is dangerous, both to yourselves, and to the Church of God—I tell you, this monster is as yet in labour; but if he be not prevented, he will eject a poisonous serpent, for which no charmer can be found.

I lately met with "The Theology of Peter Abelard." I confess this title made me curious to read.—I have sent you the books with my remarks; whether there is a just cause for my apprehensions, judge ye. As new terms and new ideas disturbed my spirit, and I had no one before whom I could freely unbosom my thoughts, I have applied myself to you, and implore you to defend the cause of God and the whole Latin Church. The man fears you, and dreads your authority. For, indeed, almost all the champions of divine truth being deceased, a domestic enemy hath invaded the defenceless state of the Church, and hath betaken himself to a singular method of teaching; dealing with Scripture, as he used to do with logic, by introducing his own inventions and novelties: a censor, not a disciple of the faith, a corrector, not a follower."

He then mentions the heads of the heresy, which he had discovered, and which were much the same as those which have already been described, and he promises to enlarge in writing on the same argument, "with the help of Him, in whose hand are both we and our words; nor," says he, "do I value your being offended at my language, pro-

⁴ *Eximius*.
⁵ Psalm xxi.

⁵ Bern. Opera. Vol. I. p. 303.

⁵ Hence it is evident, that Bernard had not yet distinguished himself in this controversy, though it must have been of above eighteen years standing. A plain proof of his caution and modesty.

vided I please you in the doctrine. If I can convince you that I am justly moved, I trust you also will be moved, and, in an important cause like this, will not fear to part with him, though he be a foot, an hand, or even an eye. I myself have loved him, and wish to do so still, God is my witness: but in this cause I see neither relation nor friend."

Bernard read the book which William sent, and returned this answer. "I think your zeal both just and necessary: that it was not idle, the book, which you have sent me, demonstrates. In this book you effectually stop the mouths of gainsayers: not that I have given it that accurate survey, which you desire; but I own I am pleased with it, even from a cursory reading, and I think the arguments solid and convincing. But as I have not been accustomed to trust to my own judgment, especially in things of so great importance, I believe the best way would be for you and me to meet, and talk over the subject. Yet even this, I think, cannot be done till after Easter, lest the devotions of the holy season be distracted. But I must beseech you to have patience with me, in regard to my silence on the subject, since I was hitherto ignorant of most, if not all the particulars. As to that which you exhort me to, God is able to inspire me with his good spirit through your prayers."

Bernard, having, at length, made himself master of the subject, and, being impressed with its magnitude, resolved to exert himself on the occasion. He first held a private conference with Abelard, and admonished him, in a friendly manner, to correct his errors. But this first attempt being fruitless, he took two or three persons with him, according to the precept of the Gospel; and, in their presence, expostulated with the innovator.^a Finding his endeavours to be unsuccessful, and observing, on accurate inquiry, how much the evil spread, it now became a question with Bernard, whether he ought to sacrifice the honour of God and the good of souls to the humour of an artful and obstinate heretic. As a conscientious spirit, like his, was obliged to decide this question in the negative, and as he had sufficiently exculpated himself from the charge of personal malice, or blind precipitation, he began to warn the disciples of Abelard against the errors of their master, and to guard, as far as in him lay, the Christian world against the growing heresy.

He wrote to pope Innocent in these terms. "Another foundation is laid, than that which has been laid for us: A new Creed is coined in France: virtues and vices are dis-

cussed, the Sacraments are treated unfaithfully; and the mystery of the Holy Trinity is investigated, not in simplicity and sobriety, but in a manner contrary to that, which we have received.—Our theologian, with Arius disposes of the Trinity by degrees and measures; with Pelagius prefers freewill to grace; with Nestorius divides Christ, and excludes the man Christ Jesus from all connection with the Trinity."¹

To another bishop he wrote thus. "The dragon had been silent many days; but, when he was silent in Britain,² he conceived iniquity in France. The man boasts, that he hath infected the court of Rome with the poison of his novelty; that he hath dispersed his books among the Romans: and he assumes those as the patrons of his error, by whom he ought to be condemned. May God defend that Church for which he died, that he may present it to himself, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."³

Let this suffice for a specimen of the glowing language of Bernard; too vehement perhaps, but surely kindled by the fire of charity. Those, however, alone can judge of the spirit of the man with candour and equity, who feel the importance of divine truth. Humanly speaking, the errors of Abelard, aided by the propensities of our depraved nature, might in a silent and gradual manner have pervaded all Europe, and the propagation of Socinianism might have been matured six centuries ago, if the mischief had not been thus vigorously opposed.

In the archiepiscopal city of Sens, a superstitious ceremony, namely, the translation of a saint's body into the cathedral Church was to be performed in the year 1140. Abelard, incensed at the open and repeated opposition of Bernard, challenged him to make good his charges of heresy at this solemn assembly. Undoubtedly he proceeded regularly in the formality of the challenge. For he implored the archbishop of Sens to cite his accuser before the assembly, and promised to meet him. The archbishop wrote to Bernard accordingly, and named the day on which he should expect to see him. Bernard seems to have been considerably embarrassed at this step. His good sense enabled him to see the difference between popular preaching, and close scholastical argumentation. He had been habituated to the former; with the latter he was unacquainted: and, he knew that Abelard excelled all men in the arts of controversy, in which also age and experience would give him a great advantage over a young antagonist. Bernard, therefore, at first refused to appear. "I was but a youth," says he, in his own account of this matter,

¹ Id. p. 306.

² He alludes to the Pelagian heresy, which had flourished in Britain.

³ Bern. Opera. Vol. I. p. 307.

"and he a man of war from his youth." Besides, I judged it improper to commit the measures of divine faith, which rested on the foundations of eternal truth, to the petty reasonings of the schools. I said, that his own writings were sufficient to accuse him, and that it was not my concern, but that of the bishops, to decide concerning his tenets."

Elated at the apparent pusillanimity of Bernard, Abelard collected his friends, spoke in a strong tone of victory, and appealed to many concerning the justice of his cause. "What things he wrote of me to his scholars," says Bernard, "I love not to relate. He took care to spread the news every where, that he would answer me at Sens on the day appointed. I yielded, however, though with tears and much reluctance, to the advice of my friends. They saw that all men were going, as it were, to the spectacle, to behold the combatants. What would they say, if one of them did not appear? The people would stumble, the adversary would triumph, and error would grow stronger, if none should appear to answer and to contradict. Moved by these reasons, I determined at length to meet Abelard at the time and place, with no other preparation than that Scripture promise, do not premeditate, how you may answer; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall say; and that other, the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me."

The assembly was splendid. Lewis VII. was there with his nobles; the archbishop with the bishops of his diocese, many abbots, professors, and in general all the learned of France were present.

The superstitious ceremony being performed on the first day, on the second the two abbots appeared, and every eye was fixed on them. The whole assembly was suspended in expectation of the contest. Bernard arose, and in a modest and diffident manner, declared; "I accuse not this man; let his own works speak against him. Here they are, and these are the propositions extracted from them. Let him say, I wrote them not, or let him condemn them, if they be erroneous, or let him defend them against my objections." He then delivered the charges to the promoter, who began distinctly to read them. He had not read far, when Abelard arose. "I appeal," said he, "to the pope," and refusing to hear any more, began to leave the assembly. The assembly was astonished at the unexpected step. "Do you fear," said Bernard, "for your person? you are perfectly secure: you know that nothing is intended against you: you may answer freely, assured of a patient hearing." "I have appealed to the court of Rome," cried the appalled heretic, and withdrew.

Bernard, in writing the account of these transactions to the pope, gives it as his opinion, that the procedure of Abelard was unjustifiable, to appeal from judges, of whom he had himself made choice.

If the issue of the conference between these two renowned antagonists has been such as to disappoint the reader's expectations, something, however divinely instructive, may be learned from the narrative. I know nothing in Bernard's history more decisively descriptive of his character, than his conduct in this whole transaction. By nature, sanguine and vehement; by grace and self-knowledge, modest and diffident, he seems, on this occasion, to have united boldness with timidity, and caution with fortitude. It was evidently in the spirit of the purest faith in God, as well as in the most charitable zeal for divine truth, that he came to the contest; while Abelard, who, presumptuous through a long course of scholastic honours, came elated and self-confident, dropped in the very crisis, which called for his eloquence and resources. His courage seems to have failed him;—or, did the consciousness of real heresy make him incapable of standing before a distinct and orderly examination? At any rate, the humble was exalted, and the proud was degraded, according to the maxims of the Gospel; and the conduct of the men was a precise counterpart of the doctrines which they severally espoused.

The bishops of France wrote to the pope an account of the procedure; and, in their words, I shall recite the little that remains to be mentioned of the acts of the assembly.

Having given an account of the conduct of Bernard, perfectly agreeable to that which we have heard from the abbot himself, they observe, that "he certainly appeared at Sens, inflamed with pious fervour, nay, unquestionably with the fire of the Holy Spirit." And they proceed as follows: "As Abelard's sentiments were read over and over in public audience, and as the arguments of Bernard, partly built on the most solid reasons, partly on the authorities of Augustine and other holy fathers, convinced the synod, that the tenets, which he opposed, were not only false but also heretical, we, sparing the man out of deference to the apostolic See, condemned the opinions. We entreat you to confirm our decrees, and to impose silence on the author of the books, in order to prevent the pernicious consequences with which his errors may be attended."

In what manner Bernard disproved the tenets of Abelard before the council, may be judged from the following brief review of his long epistle to the pope.

"The new theologian of France is one,

who scorns to be ignorant of any thing in heaven above, or in earth below; to one point only, himself and his own ignorance, he is perfectly blind.—While he is prepared to give a reason for every thing, he presumes things above reason, and contrary both to reason and to faith.—We ought to consider, that Mary is commended, because she prevented reasoning by faith,* and that Zachariah was punished, because he tempted a faithful God by reasonings. Abraham also is extolled, who believed in hope against hope."

But our theologian says, "What does it profit, if, what we teach, cannot be rendered intelligible?" Thus promising, perfectly to explain mysterious things, he places degrees in the Trinity, measures in the divine Majesty, and numbers in eternity.—In the very entrance on his work, he defines faith to be "an estimation or an opinion." But Christian faith has no such limits. Let estimation and opinion belong to the academics, whose character it is to doubt of all things; to know nothing. I shall follow the sentiments of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and know that I shall not be confounded. His definition of faith, I own, is agreeable to me: Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidences of things not seen. Substance of things hoped for: not a fancy of empty conjectures. The idea of substance is connected with something certain and fixed. Faith is not estimation, but certainty.—I shall not dwell upon a number of nugatory speculations, in which, while he labours to make Plato a Christian, he makes himself a pagan. I come to more weighty matters.—I have read in a certain book of his sentences, and in his exposition of the epistle to the Romans, that he holds an original sentiment concerning the mystery of our redemption; namely, that the ancient doctors were unanimous in their mode of interpretation concerning the subject, that they all held in such a manner; but, that he holds in a different manner. And art thou he, who constructest for us a new Gospel?—Thou hast discovered, it seems, that the Son of God did not assume flesh, that he might free man from the devil.—Let them give thanks, says the Psalmist, whom the Lord hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.† This thou wouldst not deny, if thou wert not under the power of the enemy. Thou canst not give thanks with the redeemed, who art not thyself redeemed.—That man seeks not for redemption, who knows not himself to be a captive. But those, who do know, cry to the Lord; and the Lord hears them, and redeems them from the hand of the enemy.—Hear an Apostle; "If God, peradventure, may give them repentance to the acknow-

ledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."‡ Hearst thou, AT HIS WILL, and dost thou deny the power of the devil.—Hear the Lord himself. He is called by him, the prince of this world,§ and the strong man armed, AND THE POSSESSOR OF GOODS;¶ and dost thou say, that he has no power over men?—This power of Satan was known to him, who said, "who delivered us from the powers of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."—Let him learn, therefore, that the devil has not only power, but a just power over men. Though the devil himself, who invaded us, is not just; but God who exposed us to him, is just.

Man was then justly enslaved, but mercifully delivered: with such mercy, however, that justices appeared even in his deliverance.—For what could man do of himself, to recover lost righteousness, being now a bond slave of the devil? Another's righteousness is therefore assigned to him, who had lost his own. The prince of this world came, and found nothing in Christ;‡ and, when he still would lay violent hands on the innocent, most justly he lost the captives, whom he possessed; and that Being upon whom death had no just claim, having injuriously suffered the pains of death, by this voluntary submission justly freed, from the debt of death, and from the dominion of the devil, him who was legally obnoxious to both. Man was the debtor: man also paid the debt. For, if one died for all, then were all dead,* that the satisfaction of one might be imputed to all, as he alone bore the aim of all; and now he, who offended, and he, who satisfied divine justice, are found the same; because the head and the body is one Christ. The head then satisfied for the members, Christ for his own bowels, since, according to St. Paul's Gospel, which fully confutes the error of Abelard, God hath quickened us together with him, who died for us, having forgiven us all trespasses, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, nailing it to his cross, and spoiling principalities and powers.¶ May I be found among those spoils of which adverse powers are deprived!—If I be told, your father enslaved you, I answer, my brother hath redeemed me. Why may not I have another's righteousness imputed, since I have another's sin imputed to me?—Is there sin in the seed of the sinner, and not righteousness in the blood of Christ?—As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.—The fault has truly laid hold of me, but grace has also visited me.—If the judgment was by one to

Luce i. 24.

Ps. cvi. 6.

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

† Luke xi. 21.

‡ John xiv. 30.

§ Colom. ii. 15.

¶ John xiv. 30.

* Colom. i. 13.

¶ 2 Cor. v. 15.

condemnation, the free-gift was of many offences to justification.^d Nor do I fear, being thus freed from the powers of darkness, to be rejected by the Father of lights, since I am justified freely by the blood of his Son. He who pitied the sinner, will not condemn the just. I call myself just, but it is through His righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness,^e and he is made of God for us righteousness.^f—Thus is man made righteous by the blood of the Redeemer; though Abelard, this man of perdition, thinks this the only use of his coming; namely, to deliver to us good rules of life, and to give us an example of patience and charity. Is this then the whole of the great mystery of godliness, which any uncircumcised and unclean person may easily penetrate? What is there in this beyond the common light of nature? But it is not so: for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;^g thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent;^h and, if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them, that are lost.ⁱ—He asks, had the devil dominion over Abraham and the other elect? No; but he would have had, if they had not been freed by faith in him that was to come. As it is written, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad. It was the blood of Christ, which distilled, as the dew on Lazarus, in the parable, that he should not feel the flames of hell, because he believed on him, who was to suffer. We must believe of all the elect of that time, that they were born, as we are, under the powers of darkness, but were thence delivered before they died; and that only by the blood of Christ.

He asks, why so tedious and painful a mode of deliverance, since Christ could have effected it by a mere volition? Who affirms that the Almighty was limited to this mode? But the efficacy of this method, which he preferred to all other possible ones, is surely demonstrable from that very preference: and, perhaps, its excellence may hence appear,—that the grievous sufferings of our Redeemer afford us an admonition of the strongest and most impressive nature concerning our own fallen and miserable condition. But no man knows, nor can know to the full, what precious benefits, what wisdom, what propriety, what glory the unsearchable depth of this mystery contains in itself.—But, though we may not search out the mystery of the divine will, we may feel the effect of its execution, and reap the fruits of its goodness: and what we may know, we ought not to conceal.—When we were yet sinners, we were reconciled to

God by the death of his Son. Where reconciliation is, there is remission of sins. In what then lies remission of sins? This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins.^k—Why by blood, say you, what he might have done by a bare word? Ask God himself.—I may know that it is so: why it is so, I may not. Shall the potter say to him, that formed him, why hast thou made me thus?

Strange, says he, that God should be reconciled to men by the death of his Son, which ought to have incensed him the more against them. As if in one and the same transaction, the iniquity of wicked men might not displease, and the piety of the sufferer please God. What, says he, can expiate the guilt of the murder of Christ, if nothing less than that murder could expiate the sin of Adam? We answer briefly, that very blood which they shed, and the intercession of him, whom they slew.—Not simply the death, but the voluntary obedience unto death of the Redeemer was well pleasing to God; of the Redeemer I say, who by that death destroyed death, wrought salvation, retrieved innocence, triumphed over principalities and powers, reconciled all things in heaven and in earth, and restored all things. And because this precious death, which was to be spontaneously undergone, could not take place but through the sin of men, he, not delighted indeed with their wickedness, but taking occasion from it to execute the purposes of his own benevolence, by death condemned death.—This blood was able to expiate the guilt which shed it, and therefore left no doubt of its expiating the first original sin. In answer to his tragical complaints of the cruelty of this dispensation, we say, God did not thirst for blood, but for salvation, which was to be effected by blood. Salvation we say, and not as he writes, the mere display of love, and the exhibition of useful instruction and a powerful example. For what avails instruction without recovery? How useless the finest lessons, unless the body of sin be destroyed in us! At this rate the whole harm of Adam's sin lies in the exhibition of an evil example, since the medicine must be adapted to the quality of the wound. For, if we be Christians and not Pelagians, we must confess the sin of Adam to be derived to us, and by sin death; and that righteousness is restored to us by Christ, not by instruction, but by regeneration; and by righteousness life; that, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, righteousness came upon all men to justification of life.^l If, as he says, the design of the incarnation was ille-

^d Rom. v. 16.^e Rom. x. 4.^f 1 Cor. i. 30.^g 1 Cor. ii.^h Matt. xii. 25.ⁱ 2 Cor. iv. 3.^k Luke xxii. 20.^l Rom. v. 12.

mination, and a powerful incentive to love, we may own these things came from Christ; but, from whom came redemption and deliverance?

As far as in him lies, he, who attributes the glory of redemption not to the cross of Christ, but to our proficiency in holy conversation, renders void and of none effect the mystery of the divine dispensation. But God forbid, that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection.

I see, indeed, three capital objects in this work of our salvation,—the form of humility by which the Son of God made himself of no reputation,—the measure of love which he extended even to the death of the Cross,—and the mystery of redemption, in which he suffered death. The two former, exclusive of the latter, are as if you painted on a vacuum. Great and necessary indeed was the example of humility; great and worthy of all acceptance, was the example of his charity; but remove redemption, and these have no ground to stand upon. I would follow the humble Jesus, I desire to embrace with the arms of love him who loved me, and gave himself for me; but—I must eat the Paschal Lamb. Unless I eat his flesh and drink his blood, I have no life in me. It is one thing to follow Jesus, another to embrace, another to feed upon him. To follow, is wholesome counsel; to embrace, is solemn joy; to feed upon him, is a happy life. For his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. The bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.^a What room is there for counsel or for joy, without life? they are mere pictures and shadows, without a solid ground and substance. Therefore, neither examples of humility, nor displays of charity, are any thing without redemption."

If the reader has attentively considered the arguments of Abelard, and the answer of Bernard, he has seen what weight ought to be laid on a fashionable sentiment of this day, namely, that in consequence of the improvements in reasoning and philosophy, a person is now capable of expounding the Scriptures much better than the ancients could do. If the observation be supposed to be applicable to the essential doctrines of salvation, I ask, How does this appear to be the case? In subjects of human art and science, indeed, new discoveries may be expected; but with what pertinency can the remark be applied to divinity? The whole system of divine truth is not more perfectly revealed now than it was seventeen hundred years ago. The Scriptures are the same: common sense is the same: the influence of

the Holy Spirit is the same; and human wants are the same:—and if men search and pray in humility and seriousness; if they cry after knowledge, and lift up their voice for understanding; if they seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures, what is there to hinder them from understanding the fear of the Lord, and finding the knowledge of God, in one age as well as in another?" Is not God said to be willing to shew, in the ages to come, the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus?^b And will any man say, that, in some particular periods, he is not willing to unfold these inestimable riches? It is not to be denied, but that by skill in learned languages, by study, and by general cultivation of the human mind, much light may be thrown on several doubtful passages of holy writ: their connection and meaning may be rendered clearer, and so far improvements may be made in the interpretation of Scripture; but when this is admitted, we must still maintain that no new discoveries are to be expected in regard to the essential and fundamental truths of divine wisdom and holiness, and to these truths this whole remark is exclusively confined. These, wherever the Bible can be had in an intelligible language, seem to lie open to the view of all humble and serious inquirers in every age.—What can modern Socinianism say more than Abelard has done? And does not Bernard answer it in the same manner as evangelical divines do now? Even in the darkness of the twelfth century we have seen the light as clear and full in the main, as it can be at this day. Old errors may be revived and dressed up anew, but they are the same errors still. Even the praise of original genius will be denied to the modern heretic, by him, who carefully investigates antiquity. The whole circle of human sciences, however they be cultivated and improved in our days, can add nothing to the stock of spiritual understanding. In every age God has not been wanting to his Church; and divine truth has ever appeared the same, and has brought forth the same holy fruits in those, who fear God, and believe the Gospel of his Son.

I shall not now need to give an abstract of the other letters, which Bernard wrote on this occasion. In them all he sees the true ground of Abelard's errors. While this heretic undertook to comprehend all that God is, by mere human reason, while nothing seemed to escape his penetration either in heaven above or in the depth beneath, he was totally ignorant of himself. He was ignorant of nothing, but of himself. Such is the language of Bernard, concerning him, while he cautions the pope and other digni-

^a John vi.

^b Prov. ii.

^c Eph. ii. 7.

taries of the Roman Church against the seductions of heresy, and informs them how much Abelard presumed on the expectation of finding patrons at Rome, where his books had been dispersed.

The influence of Bernard's labours in this cause on the minds of the Christian world was very great, and decisively defeated the designs of the enemy. Gaufredus, one of the writers of Bernard's life, observes: "Blessed be God, who gave to us a better master, by whom he confuted the ignorance of the former, and quashed his arrogance, by whom Christ exhibited to us three special objects in his sufferings,—an example of virtue, an incentive of love, and a sacrifice of redemption.

Roused by the exhortations of Bernard, the pope pronounced a definitive sentence against Abelard, ordered his works to be burned, and the heretic to be confined in some monastery, at the discretion of the leaders of the council, which had condemned his doctrine. We have, however, better authority than that of the pope for pronouncing his sentiments heretical. And though the decisions of the pope deserve no attention from Christians, it was matter of sincere pleasure to all, who loved the souls of men, that Abelard was stripped of the power of doing mischief. As for the rest, he was treated with as great lenity as the nature of ecclesiastical government at that time, which was certainly absurd and arbitrary in many respects, would admit. He was permitted to end his days in the monastery of Cluni, over which Peter the venerable presided, who treated him with much compassion and friendship. An interview was also promoted by the good-natured offices of Peter, and of another abbot, between the two champions, the particulars of which are not known. Only it appears, that Bernard declared himself satisfied with Abelard's orthodoxy. I suppose the latter would, in conversation, retract, or soften, or explain his thoughts in the same manner as he did in an apology, which he published at this time. But the reader remembers, that this was not the first time of his submitting himself to the judgment of the Church. Whether he was sincere or not, it belongs not to man to determine. The charity of Bernard, however, is incontestable, because he dropped the accusation, as soon as Abelard had ceased to vent heretical sentiments. Not personal malice, but Christian zeal seems to have influenced the abbot of Clairval in this whole transaction.

If it be asked, what benefit resulted from the scene, which we have reviewed? it is answered, either Abelard's retraction was sincere or not. If the former, the advantage was great to the heretic himself; if the latter, he doubtless added hypocrisy to his other

crimes, though he was prevented from making himself accessory to the ruin of others. But the guilt of hypocrisy was properly and solely his own. If his opponents contracted any guilt on the account, it would be unlawful to oppose error at all, for fear of possible consequences. To this I add, that the benefit resulting to the whole Church for ages, is unquestionably evident;—a consideration worthy the attention of those, who, in their charity for single heretics, seem to forget the mercy and charity due to the souls of thousands. Abelard, however, continued after these events in quiet obscurity till his death, which took place in the year 1142.

Eleisa survived this extraordinary man many years. Their correspondence still remains, and I have examined it with a view to discover, whether there be any evidences of genuine conversion in the unhappy couple. That they were sorry for their past follies is certain; that the latter part of their lives was outwardly decent and regular is no less evident; but of real repentance, genuine faith in Christ, and the true love of God, I cannot discern any satisfactory proofs.

I have now enabled the reader, by an orderly statement of facts, to decide for himself what candour and justice there is in the declaration of a learned historian, that "Bernard misunderstood some of the opinions of Abelard, and wilfully perverted others. For," continues he, "the zeal of this good abbot too rarely permitted him to consult, in his decisions, the dictates of impartial equity; and hence it was, that he almost always applauded beyond measure, and censured without mercy." Wilful perversions, and by a good man too! what inconsistency of language! Or is Bernard called a good man ironically? Or did this writer feel a sympathy with one of these great men, and an antipathy to the other? Certainly, whoever, like Bernard, defends the real truth, as it is in Jesus, with the simplicity of a Christian, even though he preserve modesty, caution, and charity, must expect no mercy from the critics of men more zealous for the honour of what they improperly call rational religion, than for that of Jesus Christ. The world will love its own: the carnal mind is enmity against God; and he, who in charity supports evangelical truth, and, under God, is made wise to win souls to real humility and holiness, should commit himself to him that judgeth righteously, and patiently wait his decision.

If Mosheim do not altogether deserve the censure implied in these observations, undoubtedly he is not to be acquitted of uncharitableness, temerity, and self-sufficiency.

CHAPTER III.

CONTROVERSIES OF BERNARD WITH SEVERAL
OTHER REAL OR SUPPOSED HERETICS. SOME
ACCOUNT OF THE CATHARI.

So great was the esteem of Bernard throughout the western Churches, that no characters of eminence in the religious world arose, but he was looked up to as a judge to decide concerning their merits. It happened, that he had not always the same means of accurate information, as in the case of Abelard; and hence there is reason to believe, that he treats as heretics some persons, who were "the excellent of the earth." I shall throw together into this chapter the best information, which I can collect, concerning these matters. At any rate we shall find some light concerning the real Church of Christ.

Gillebert de la Porree, bishop of Poitiers, possessed of a subtle genius, and indulging a taste, like that of Abelard, undertook to explain the mystery of the Trinity, by some curious distinctions and refinements. Offence was, however, given by his publications, and the zeal and eloquence of Bernard were employed in confuting him by public disputation. I shall not attempt to explain this controversy. It seems to have originated from the metaphysical spirit of Gillebert, whose chief fault appears to have been, that he was not content with plain truth, and with stopping there in his inquiries, where the Scripture does. The Trinity in unity, received indeed in the simplicity of Scripture, is one of the clearest, as well as one of the most decisively scriptural doctrines in the world; and so it has always appeared to those, who believe what is revealed, and who are content to be ignorant of the MANNER how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three in one. But, though there seems no positive evidence of the heresy of Gillebert, the council of Rheims condemned some of his propositions, which were of a dangerous nature. Gillebert recanted them: Bernard candidly expressed his belief of the sincerity of the recantation; and the bishop of Poitiers was allowed to return to his bishopric.¹

I have examined the sentiments of Gillebert, and cannot, I own, form any determinate conception of their nature. He wandered in the misty region of abstruse metaphysics, and seems both to have lost himself, and to have been unintelligible to his readers. Bernard endeavoured to stop the mystic inquirer in his career; and this was no unprofitable employment; but again Mosheim is

displeased with the conduct of the abbot, and seems to intimate, that he himself understood the opinions of Gillebert, and that Bernard did not, when he says, "these refined notions were far above the comprehension of good St. Bernard, who was by no means accustomed to such profound disquisitions, to such intricate researches."² Does Mosheim really mean what he says, or, is the epithet good, synonymous with weak and ignorant? Bernard was, however, with the critic's leave, a man of sound understanding and of true wisdom; and, if it were worth while, I could easily furnish the reader with such specimens of Gillebert's subtilties, as would fully justify the account given of him at the beginning of this chapter.

If to oppose the popedom with vigour and fortitude be in itself a certain criterion of a real Christian, Arnold of Brescia may justly be ranked among the most eminent saints. But the spirit and views of an innovator should be known, that we may determine, whether he deserve the character of a reformer. In Arnold, the spirit of an old Roman republican was united with the theological sentiments of a Socinian. He was the disciple of Abelard, and was in action as daring as that heretic had been in speculation. Bernard vehemently opposed his designs, and while he allowed his morals to be decent and regular, he guarded the Christian world against his ambition and secular artifices. The conduct of Arnold demonstrated, that Bernard penetrated into the real character of the man. For the disciple of Abelard, having gained over at Rome a large party to his views, by his address and dexterity stirred up a sedition against the pontiff; during the violence of which, private houses were burned; the property of the clergy and nobles was plundered; the pope was driven from Rome; and, in general, the civil government was disordered and convulsed. Flushed with success, Arnold planned a scheme for the restoration of the forms of the old republic: but Providence favoured not his designs. In the end he was seized and burned, and his ashes were thrown into the Tiber. His case demonstrates, that to oppose what is established, however great be the abuses or faults of an establishment, is an uncertain criterion of character. What is it, which men really mean to substitute in the room of that government, which is established? This is a question to which every man, who fears God, should seriously attend, before he suffer himself, by countenancing innovations, to introduce an-

¹ Quarto, Vol. II. p. 602. As Mosheim's work, translated by Maclean, is far better known than the original in England, I always quote the former, and would be understood, both here and elsewhere, to refer to that rather than to the latter.

² Bern. Vol. II. p. 1138. Du Pin's 12th Cent. Chap. VIII.

Christ. "The apostolical dignity," say they, "is corrupted, by engaging itself in secular affairs, while it sits in the chair of Peter."—They do not believe infant-baptism to be a duty, alleging that passage of the Gospel, whosoever shall believe, and be baptized, shall be saved.^b They put no confidence in the intercession of Saints; and all things observed in the Church, which have not been established by Christ himself or his Apostles, they call superstitious. They do not admit of any purgatory after death; but affirm, that as soon as the souls depart out of the bodies, they enter into rest, or punishment, proving their assertion from that passage of Solomon, which way soever the tree falls, whether to the south or to the north, there it lies, whence they make void all the prayers and oblations of believers for the deceased.—Those of them who have returned to our Church, told us, that great numbers of their persuasion were scattered almost every where, and that among them were many of our clergy and monks."

All this seems to be at least as fair an account of true Christians, as might be expected from the mouths of enemies. Evervinus can be considered in no other light than that of an enemy, for he calls these men by the harsh name of monsters;—and it deserves to be noticed, that, from his confession it plainly appears, there were societies of Christians, in the twelfth century, who disowned the pope and all the fashionable superstitions. These societies were poor and illiterate indeed, hardly distinguishable from a number of fantastic and seditious sects, headed by the very exceptionable characters we have reviewed; and they were not denominated from any one leader of eminence. They do not seem to have understood the necessity of the existence of property, and therefore, with vulgar ignorance, they held, as it was reported, a tenet inconsistent with the good order of society;^c yet, with all these defects, they probably possessed the spirit of real godliness; and, though imperfect in light, and in some points of practice, upheld the real truth of God in the earth, during the general profligacy and corruption.

If Bernard had been habitually conversant among them, I can conceive that much good might have arisen to both parties. From him they might have learned a more copious and perspicuous view of the doctrines of divine grace, and have improved in the knowledge of the fundamental truths of the Scripture. His pious zeal and charity and humi-

lity might have instructed their minds, and disposed them to give up their absurd ideas concerning property and social rights: and he, from an intercourse with them might have learned, that the pope was indeed the Antichrist of Scripture, and so have been emancipated from a variety of superstitions, in which he was involved all his days. But mutual ignorance and prejudice prevented both him and them from even intimately knowing each other. In the 65th and 66th sermons on the Canticles, he attacks these sectaries; he condemns their scrupulous refusal to swear at all, which, according to him, was also one of their peculiarities. He upbraids them with the observance of secrecy in their religious rites, not considering the necessity which persecution laid upon them. He finds fault with a practice among them, of dwelling with women in the same house, without being married to them; though it must be owned, he expresses himself as one, who knew very little of the manners of the sect. From the strength of prejudice, and from the numberless rumours propagated against them, he suspects them of hypocrisy; yet his testimony in favour of their general conduct seems to overbalance all his invectives. "If," says he, "you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christian; if you observe their conversation, nothing can be more blameless; and what they speak, they prove by deeds. You may see a man, for the testimony of his faith, frequent the Church, honour the elders, offer his gift, make his confession, receive the sacrament. What more like a Christian? As to life and manners, he circumvents no man, overreaches no man, and does no violence to any. He fasts much, he eats not the bread of idleness, he works with his hands for his support.—The whole body, indeed, are rustic, and illiterate; and all, whom I have known of this sect, are very ignorant."

He, who confesses a set of men to have been so apparently sound and upright in faith and practice, should not have treated them with contempt, because they were poor and vulgar. Their ignorance and rustic habits should rather serve as some apology for their errors concerning the nature of baptism and of human society. And the proofs of their hypocrisy ought to be very strong indeed, which can overturn such evidences of piety and integrity as Bernard himself has admitted concerning them. It seems also from his account, that they were not Separatists, in the modern sense of the word. Though, no doubt, they had private religious assemblies, they attended the worship of the general Church, and joined with other Christians in every thing, which they deemed to be laudable. It would be tedious to ex-

^b These sectaries are charged with Manichæism, and of course with the total rejection of water-baptism. It was no unusual thing to stigmatise new sects with the odious name of Manichæes, though I know no evidence that there were any real remains of that ancient sect in the twelfth century.

^c We shall afterwards see abundant occasion to doubt the truth even of this charge.

^d The truth of this charge also, as will appear afterwards, is much to be doubted.

amine minutely the charges and arguments of Bernard. He attacks some Manichean errors with great justice, supposing the men, against whom he writes, to be Manichees. He argues in defence of infant-baptism, and, — lamentable blindness in so holy a person! — he vindicates the doctrine of purgatory, and other Roman superstitions. He owns, that these men died with courage in defence of their doctrine, and blames those who had, in an illegal and irregular manner, destroyed some of them. Some notions, concerning marriage, which they were supposed to hold, he justly rebukes, though, from the excessive prejudice of their adversaries, it is very difficult to know how to affix charges of real guilt upon them.

Let not the lover of real Christianity be distressed at these things. The power of prejudice is great; and it is hard to say how many wrong notions both Bernard and these supposed heretics might maintain, through the circumstances of the times, and yet both serve the same God in the Gospel of his Son. That he did so is abundantly evident; that many of THEM did so, their lives and their sufferings evince. It will be one of the felicities of heaven, that Saints shall no longer misunderstand one another. But there want not additional evidences, that this people of Cologne were true PROTESTANTS. Egbert, a monk, and afterwards abbot of Schonauge, tells us,* that he had often disputed with these heretics, and says, "These are they who are commonly called Cathari." From his authority I shall venture to distinguish them by this name. The term corresponds to the more modern appellation of PURITANS, and most probably was affixed to them, in derision and contempt, by their contemporaries. Egbert adds, that they were divided into several sects, and maintained their sentiments by the authority of Scripture. See by the confession of an enemy their veneration for the divine word, and their constant use of it, in an age when the authority of Scripture was weakened, and its light exceedingly obscured, by a variety of traditions and superstitions. "They are armed," says the same Egbert, "with all those passages of Holy Scripture, which in any degree seem to favour their views; with these they know how to defend themselves, and to oppose the Catholic truth, though they mistake entirely the true sense of Scripture, which cannot be discovered without great judgment."—"They are increased to great multitudes throughout all countries—their words spread like a cancer. In Germany we call them Cathari; in Flanders they call them Piphles; in French, Tisserands, because many of them are of that occupation." Bernard himself also, a Frenchman,

speaks of both sexes of them, as weavers; and it became not a man of his piety to speak degradingly of the humble labours of peaceful industry. But such were the times! monastic sloth appeared then more holy than useful mechanical occupations. We seem, however, by comparing together several fragments of information, to have acquired some distinct ideas of these Cathari: they were a plain, unassuming, harmless, and industrious race of Christians, condemning, by their doctrine and manners, the whole apparatus of the reigning idolatry and superstition, placing true religion in the faith and love of Christ, and retaining a supreme regard for the divine word. Neither in that, nor in any other age, since the propagation of the Gospel of Christ, have the fanciful theories of philosophers contributed to enlighten or improve mankind in religious matters. It is a strict attention to the revealed word, which, under the influence of the divine Spirit, has alone secured the existence of a holy seed in the earth, who should serve God in righteousness; though they might frequently be destitute of learning and every secular advantage; as seems to have been the case with the Cathari.—"Even so, Father, for it hath seemed good in thy sight."

It appears also, that their numbers were very considerable in this century; but Cologne, Flanders, the south of France, Savoy, and Milan were their principal places of residence.

"They declare," says Egbert, "that the true faith and worship of Christ is no-where to be found, but in their meetings, which they hold in cellars and weaving rooms. If ever they do accompany the people, with whom they dwell, to hear mass, or to receive the sacrament, they do it in dissimulation, that they may be thought to believe what they do not; for they maintain, that the priestly order is perished in the Roman Church, and is preserved only in their sect." He gives, however, and at too great a length to be here inserted, some noble testimonies of the soundness of their doctrine, in the rejection of purgatory, prayers for the dead, and the like.

I am obliged to collect, from thinly-scattered materials, the evidences of the true character of these Cathari; and much has, I think, already appeared in their favour, from the mouths of enemies. Egbert, we see, allows, in perfect agreement with Bernard, that they were not Separatists, in the modern sense of the word, and that they attended the public service and sacraments of the general Church. I suppose they knew how to make a practical distinction between what still remained divinely excellent in the Church, and what was idolatrous and corrupt. They seem to have conformed to the public worship, much in the same manner,

* Aitz, p. 149.

That is weavers; see Du Pin, Cent XII. p. 38.

as the Apostles themselves did to the Jewish Church, while it existed, still preserving an union among themselves in worship, and in hearing sermons, so far as the iniquity of the times would permit. That, which Egbert charges to their hypocrisy, I should think admits of a more liberal construction. It may appear to deserve the name of candour and even of charity. He, who agrees with you in practice, so far as you are right, ought to be respected for his conformity, notwithstanding, that in things, which he deems wrong, he explicitly opposes you.—It were to be wished, that all serious Christians had acted in that manner, and had not been so hasty, as some of them have been, in forming a total separation from the general Church. Then the happy influence of their views in religion might have spread more powerfully; nor is there any particular danger that they themselves would have received infection from the world, while they were estranged from it in practice and in manners. After all, circumstances may arise, when an entire separation from the whole body of nominal Christians may become necessary to the people of God. But this should never be attempted with precipitation. And the meekness and charity, which the Cathari exhibited in this point, seem highly laudable. He also, who has observed so much of the world, as to perceive that a deliberate system of hypocrisy usually prevails among a collection of idle vagrants, but seldom or never among men who subsist by patient industry, will be little moved by Egbert's charge of dissimulation.

The same Egbert confesses also, that they had many things mingled with their master's doctrine, which are not to be found among the ancient Manichees. "They are also," says he, "divided among themselves: what some of them say is denied by others." If the Cathari held some doctrines quite distinct from Manicheism, it should seem, that the whole charge of that ancient odious heresy, might be nothing more than a convenient term of reproach. Even Bernard, who appears to have been extremely ill informed concerning this people, remarks, that they had no particular father of their heresy;—an observation, which may imply more than he was willing to allow, namely, that they were not heretics, but Christians. As to the diversity of sentiments among themselves, what denomination of Christians ever existed, who, in some lesser matters, did not maintain several diversities?

This people continued in a state of extreme persecution, throughout this century. Galdinus, bishop of Milan, who had inveighed against them during the eight or nine years of his episcopacy,^a died in the year

^a Allix, p. 153.

1173, by an illness contracted through the excess of his vehemence in preaching against them.

There is a piece, entitled "the noble Lesson," written undoubtedly by one of the Cathari, which in the body of it says, eleven hundred years are already passed, since it was written thus; "for we are in the last time." The writer, supposing that the world was drawing near to an end, exhorts his brethren to prayer, watching, and the renunciation of worldly goods. He speaks with energy of death and judgment; of the different issues of godliness and of wickedness; and, from a review of the Scripture-history, connected with the experience of the times in which he lived, concludes, that there are but few that shall be saved.

The first principle of those, says he, who desire to serve God, is to honour God the Father, to implore the grace of his glorious Son, and the Holy Ghost, who enlightens us in the true way. This is the Trinity, full of all power, wisdom, and goodness, to whom we ought to pray for strength to overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh, that we may preserve soul and body in love. To the love of God, he observes, the love of our neighbours should be joined, which comprehends the love even of our enemies. He speaks of the believer's hope of being received into glory. He explains the origin of all that evil, which reigns in the world; and he traces it up to the sin of Adam, which brought forth death; whence, says he, Christ hath redeemed us by his own death. He asserts the necessity of holiness, in order to salvation. He explains the spirituality of the law of God, and describes the punishment of transgressors as the effect of divine justice and goodness. He illustrates the holiness of the divine character, in the economy of the Old Testament, and in the history of the Israelites, and delineates the purity and perfection of the Gospel precepts. He relates the great historical facts of Christianity, and makes some just observations on the spirit of persecution. Very remarkable is the character, which he gives of the Vandees in his own time, contrasted with that of their enemies. Let the reader consider, whether we have not here the flock of Christ among wolves. "If a man," says he, "love those, who desire to love God and

^a The manuscript of this composition was given to the public Library of the University of Cambridge, by Sir Samuel Morland in the year 1638. The people of whom the author speaks, are called Waldenses or Vauds, from the valleys of Piedmont. They afterwards were called Waldenses, from Peter Waldo, of whom hereafter; and by that name, they are known to this day. But by the date 1100 they were evidently a distinct people before his time, and, most likely, had existed, as such, for some generations. The sects of the Cathari had, in all probability, been known by Constantine of Turin, in the ninth century. The whole of the "noble lesson," is given us by Sir Samuel Morland, in his History of the Churches of Piedmont. Allix, 168.

Jealous Christ; if he will neither censure, nor reward, nor act decently, nor live in lawfulness and justice, nor avenge himself of his enemies, they presently say, the man is a Warden; he deserves to be punished: and iniquitous methods are then used to rob him of the fruits of his lawful industry. Such an one, however, conceals himself with the hope of eternal salvation." He represents their enemies as supposing themselves to be good men and true Christians; and exposes their folly in placing hopes on a death-bed repentance, the priestly absolution, and masses.

He roundly condemns the whole system of Antichrist, which prevailed in his time, particularly the fatal doctrine of priestly absolution. He describes the true practical principles of Christian godliness, and declares, that no other divine revelation is to be expected. He speaks with equal simplicity and strength of the last judgment, and of the everlasting punishments of the wicked; "from which," says he, "may God deliver us, if it be his blessed will, and give us to hear what he shall say to his elect. Come hither, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world, where you shall have true pleasure, riches, and honour. May it please the Lord, who formed the world, that we may be of the number of his elect, to dwell in his coast for ever. Praise be God. Amen."

Such was the pervasion of divine grace,—to take out of a corrupt and idolatrous world of nominal Christians, a people formed for himself, who should show forth his praise, and who should provoke the rest of mankind by the light of true humility, and holiness;—a people, singularly separate from their neighbours in spirit, manners, and discipline; rude indeed, and illiterate, and not only discontemned, but even condemned by the few real good men, who adhered altogether to the Romish Church,—condemned, because continually misrepresented. Nor do I know a more striking proof of that great truth of the divine Word, that in the worst of times, the Church shall exist, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,

CHAPTER IV.

THE WRITINGS OF BERNARD REVIEWED.

In this chapter I shall take notice of some of those parts of Bernard's writings, which bear no relation to the controversies that have already engaged our attention.

His epistles come first under our consideration; and, among these, the epistle directed to Bruno, elected archbishop of Cologne,

will deserve the attention of pastors, and of every person, who aspires to the most importance of all functions.

"You ask of me, illustrious Bruno, whether you ought to acquiesce in the desires of those, who would promote you to the office of a bishop. What mortal can presume to decide this? Perhaps God calls you; who may dare dissuade? Perhaps he does not; who may advise you to accept? Whether the calling be of God or not, who can know, except the Spirit, who searches the secret things of God, or he, to whom the Spirit may reveal it? Your humble, but awful confession in your letter renders it still more difficult to give advice; so grievously, and, as I believe, with truth, do you condemn the course of your past life. For, it cannot be denied, that such a life is unworthy of so sacred an office. But you fear on the other side, and I also have the same apprehensions, that it may be wrong not to improve the talent of knowledge committed to you, though your conscience do thus accuse you; only it may be observed, that you may faithfully employ that talent in some other method, less extensive indeed, but less hazardous. I own, I am struck with a serious dread: I speak freely to you, as to my own soul, what I really think, when I consider from what, and to what you are called; especially, as no time of repentance will intervene, through which the passage, however dangerous, might be made. And truly, the right order of things requires, that a man should take care of his own soul, before he undertake the care of the souls of others.—But what if God hasten his grace, and multiply his mercy toward you?—Blessed indeed is the man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin. For who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? If God justify, who is he that condemns? The thief obtained salvation in this compendious method. One and the same day he confessed his sins, and was introduced into glory. The cross was to him a short passage from a region of death into the land of the living, and from the mire of corruption into the paradise of pleasure. This sudden remedy of godliness the happy sinful woman, found when on a sudden, where sin had abounded, grace began also to abound. Without a long course of penitential labour her many sins were forgiven.—It is one thing, however, to obtain a speedy remission; another, from a life of transgression, to be promoted to a bishopric.—I can give no decisive opinion.—But there is a duty, which we may perform for a friend without danger, and not without fruit; we may give him the suffrage of our prayers to God on his behalf. Leaving to God the secret of his own counsel, we may earnestly implore him to work in you

and concerning you, what is becoming in his sight, and what is for your real good."

Bruno having accepted the archbishopric, Bernard wrote thus to him.^k "If all, who are called to the ministry, are of necessity called also to the heavenly kingdom, the archbishop of Cologne is safe indeed. But if Saul and Judas were elected, the one to a crown, the other to the priesthood by God himself; and the Scripture, which asserts this, cannot be broken, the archbishop of Cologne has reason to fear. If that sentence also be now as true as ever, namely, that God hath not chosen many noble, mighty, and wise,—Has not the archbishop of Cologne a three-fold reason for solicitude?—Has that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger,^l is the voice of wisdom itself.—May I always deal with my friends in the language of salutary fear, not of fallacious adulation! To that he directs me, who says, Blessed is the man that feareth always.^m From this he dissuades me, who says, O my people, those, who lead thee, cause thee to err."ⁿ

In so serious a light appeared to Bernard the nature of the pastoral office.—Do men in our times seek for eminent ecclesiastical situations with such impressions?—or, do secular gains frequently make a predominant part of their views? Perhaps there is not any one point of all practical religion, in which the ancients may more advantageously be compared with the moderns, than in the subject of the pastoral office, with regard to the ideas of its importance, and the qualifications which it requires.

In^o another epistle to Guigo and his brethren, Carthusian monks, he describes the nature of true charity. "There is one, who confesses to the Lord, because he is mighty; there is another who confesses to him, because he is good to the Confessor; and a third, who confesses to him, because he is simply good. The first is a slave, and fears for himself; the second is mercenary, and desires his own interest merely; the third is a Son, and behaves dutifully to a Father. He, who lives under the predominance of fear, or of desire of his own interest, is selfish; but charity seeketh not her own.—When a man prefers his own will to the eternal law of God, he perversely attempts to imitate the Creator, who is a law to himself. Alas! In us such a spirit binds us downward to death and hell. He, who will not be sweetly ruled by the divine Will, is penally governed by himself, and he, who casts off the easy yoke and light burden of love, must suffer the intolerable load of self-will.—My Lord God, may I breathe under the light burden of love, nor be restrained by slavish fear, nor allured by mercenary desire; but

may I be led by thy free Spirit, which may witness with my spirit, that I am thy child!

—Love, indeed, is not without fear and desire; but it sanctifies and regulates them both.—But, because we are carnal, our love is carnal at first, which, if it be directed in right order, improving in its steps under the conduct of grace, will be consummated by the Spirit.—In the first place, a man loves himself on his own account;—and, when he finds that he is not sufficient for his own happiness, he begins, by faith, to seek after God as necessary for him. He then loves God in the second degree, but for himself, not for the sake of God. But when, through the urgency of his wants, he has been brought to cultivate acquaintance with God, by degrees God himself begins to be known as he is, and of course to be loved: having tasted that the Lord is gracious, he passes to the third degree, to love God for what he is in himself. In this degree he stops, and I do not know, that any man in this life attains a fourth, namely, that a man should love himself only on account of God. Let them assert this, who have found it: to me, I own, it seems impossible. But, it will take place, when the good and faithful servant shall be introduced into the joy of his Lord."

Let this suffice for a small specimen of the metaphysical doctrine of charity, on which there has been so much controversy in different ages. The gradual progress of spirituality in religion seems to be justly described by Bernard; and the plain dictates of common sense do evidently restrain the flights of his fancy. For, in truth, what is the amount of all the metaphysics, which good men have written, concerning the disinterested love of God, but this, that it ought to be sincere, not selfish; and does not the common meaning of the word love, teach us this? If I may be said to love a friend for the sake of my own interest, it is, at least, a very improper mode of speech; for, in strict propriety I love not him, but my own interest, or some gain which I conceive attainable through him. On the other hand, to talk of loving God, and relinquishing self-love, is unnatural and idle romance. On this subject then, which has tortured the minds of pious souls, it would be wise to stick to common sense, which knows no repugnance between the love of God and self-love, though the latter ought in all cases to be subordinate to the former: and this is the point, which Bernard seems to have understood and maintained. The greatest defect in the latter seems to be that, which was common to the age, namely, the want of a distinct and orderly description of the *PARTE* of the Gospel, which alone can work the love, which he describes.

In another epistle,^p he comments very

^k Ep. 9. ^l Luke xxii. 26. ^m Prov. xxviii. 14

ⁿ Isaiah iii. 12. ^o Ep. 11. p. 56.

justly on the judicial ignorance, which St. Paul describes as the punishment from God on those, who knew God, and yet glorified him not as God.* "But," says he, "God who calleth things that be not, as though they were, in compassion to those, who are reduced, as it were, to nothing, hath, in the mean time, given us to relish by faith, and to seek by desire, that hidden manna, of which the Apostle says, Your life is hid with Christ in God." I say in the mean time, because we cannot yet contemplate it according to its nature, nor fully embrace it by love. Hence we begin to be something of that new creature, which will, at length, become a perfect man, and attain the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and this will take place beyond doubt, when righteousness shall turn again to judgment, and the desire of the traveller shall be changed into the fulness of love. For, if faith and desire initiate us here when absent, understanding and love will consummate us when present. And, as faith leads to full knowledge, so desire leads to perfect love.—By these two arms of the soul, understanding and love, it comprehends the length, and depth, and breadth, and height: and Christ is all these things." He goes on to expose the folly of seeking the praise of men, and the inconsistency of this spirit with the humility, which becomes creatures so empty and vain.

Bernard, having been addressed in terms of great respect by Rainald, an abbot,† with his usual humility shews how averse he was to hear himself commended. "Indeed," says he, "by extolling you depress me. But, that I may not sink under the pressure, I am consoled by the testimonies of divine truth: it is good for me, that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes.—Such is the marvellous efficacy of the Word of God, that while it humbles, it exalts us. This is indeed the kind and powerful operation of the Word, by whom all things were made; and thus, indeed, Christ's yoke becomes easy, and his burden light.—Light, indeed, is his burden. For what can be lighter than a load, which even carries every person, who bears it.—A burden which unburdens the soul.—In all nature I seek to find some resemblance to this, and I seem to discover a shadow of it in the wings of the bird, which are born by the creature, and yet sustain and support its flights through the open firmament of heaven."

To undertake pilgrimages to Jerusalem, was the folly of the times. An abbot, John Carnotensis, was seized with this infatuation. Bernard, however, rebuked† his zeal, and endeavoured to convince him, that he ought not to abdicate the pastoral care, which had been committed to him. The

chief argument, which supported John in this scheme, was drawn from the strength and vehemence of his desires. It is the usual plea of all, who really deserve the imputation of enthusiasm in religion; and it is sufficiently answered by Bernard. "You say, whence should I have so strong a desire, if it be not from God? With your good leave I will speak my sentiments. Stolen waters are sweet: and whoever is not ignorant of Satan's devices, will not hesitate to say, that this poisonous sweetness is infused into your thirsting heart by a minister of Satan, transformed into the appearance of an angel of light."

Bernard de Portis was a young man of the Carthusian order, and had been elected a bishop of a Church among the Lombards. Our Bernard, however, thinking him unfit for the situation, wrote to pope Innocent his sentiments; which had so great authority, as to prevent the young man's consecration. "It is, indeed, worthy of your dignity, to place a hidden light in a conspicuous situation.—Let it be placed, if you please, on a candlestick, that it may be a burning and shining light, but only in a place, where the violence of the wind may not prevail to extinguish it. Who knows not the restless and insolent spirit of the Lombards?—What can a young man of a weak body, and accustomed to solitude, do amidst a barbarous, turbulent, and stormy people? His sanctity and their perverseness, his simplicity and their deceitfulness, will not agree together. Let him be reserved, if you please, for a more suitable situation, and for a people, whom he may so govern as to profit; and let us not lose, by a precipitate preferment, the fruit which may be reaped in due time."

To Baldwin,‡ whom, he had dismissed from his own monastery, and appointed abbot of the monastery of Reate, he writes with that vehemence of zeal and affection, which characterize his writings. But there is no need to transcribe the epistle. "Doctrine, example, and prayer," he recommends as the three things, which constitute a pastor. The last of the three he particularly recommends, as, "that, which gives grace and efficacy to the labours of the preacher, whether these labours be of word or of deed."

See how the views of eternity mingle with the charitable affections of Bernard, and how familiar, and, at the same time, how animating were his prospects of the last day! "I long for your presence," says he to a friend,§ "but when? At least in the city of our God; if in truth we have here no continuing city, but seek one to come. There, there, we shall see, and our heart shall rejoice. In the mean time, I shall be delighted with what I hear of you, hoping and expecting to

* Rom. ii.
Ep. 72. p. 73.

* Coloss. iii. 3.
Ep. 82. p. 85

* Ep. 135 p. 157.
† Ep. 204. p. 159.

* Ep. 201. p. 152.

see you face to face in the day of the Lord, that my joy may be full. In addition to the many good things, which I constantly hear of you, let me beg your earnest prayers for me."

To * Eugenius his disciple, newly advanced to the pontificate, of whom we have already given some account, he writes with an ardour of sincere piety, which might induce one to forget, if any thing could, the vices of the popedom itself, as well as the pitiable superstitions, with which early habits had clouded the honest devotion of Bernard.—"I waited," says he, "for some time, if, perhaps, one of my sons might return, and assuage a father's grief, by saying, Joseph thy Son liveth, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. No account arriving, I write, indeed, not from inclination, but from necessity, in compliance with the requests of friends, to whom I could not deny the little services, which the few days I yet may have to live may allow.—I envy not your dignity, because what was wanting to me, I trust I have in him, who not only comes after me, but also by me. For, dignified as you are, I have begotten you through the Gospel. What then is our hope, our joy, and crown of rejoicing? Are not you—in the presence of God?—It remains, that this change being made in your circumstances, the state of the Church may be changed also for the better.—Claim nothing from her for yourself, except that you ought to lay down your life for her sake, if it be necessary. If Christ has sent you, you will reckon, that you came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. A genuine successor of Paul will say with him, 'Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.' Peter's successor will hear Peter's voice, 'not as Lords over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock.'—All the Church of the Saints rejoices in the Lord, expecting from you, what it seemed to have had in none of your predecessors for many ages past.—And should not I rejoice? I own I do so, but with trembling. For, though I have laid aside the name of a father, I still have toward you a father's fear, anxiety, affection, and bowels. I consider your elevation, and I dread a fall: I consider the height of dignity, and I startle at the appearance of the abyss, which lieth beneath. You have attained an higher lot, but not a safer; a sublimer station, but not a securer. Remember, you are the successor of him, who said, 'silver and gold have I none.'" He then explains the particular business, on occasion of which he wrote at this time; and he desires him to act in such a manner, "that men may know that there is a prophet in Israel."—"O that I might see before I die the Church

of God, as in ancient times, when the Apostles let down their nets for a draught net of silver and gold, but of souls! How do I wish you to inherit the voice of him, who said, thy money perish with thee! O voice of thunder, let all who wish ill to Zion be confounded at its sound! Many are in pleasing expectation, the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Many say in their hearts, the flowers appear in our land. Take courage then, and be strong. But, in all your works, remember that you are a man, and let the fear of him, who restraineth the spirit of princes, be ever before your eyes. What a number of pontiffs before you have in a short time been removed! By constant meditation, amidst the blandishments of this fading glory, remember your latter end. Those in whose seat you now sit, you will doubtless follow to the grave."

It cannot be denied, that the zeal, the sincerity, the purity of Christian doctrine, in all the essentials at least, the charity, and the blameless manners of a reformer, appeared in Bernard. How happened it then, that numbers of illiterate weavers, as we have seen, detected the spirit of Antichrist in the popedom, and avoided its superstitions, while this abbot was imposed on by its false glare of sanctity! I suppose, because he was an abbot. The delusive splendor of fictitious holiness, so intimately connected with Antichrist, deceived one of the most upright of human kind. It was not given him to observe the unreasonableness of expecting the completion of his pious wishes in the Church, under the auspices of the See of corruption! If he had lived at large in the world, with no predilection for the court of Rome, and had been favoured with the same divine grace, and even with no higher degree of Christian virtue, than that which he then possessed, he might have been the head of the Cathari, whom he ignorantly censured! So much do circumstances contribute to the formation of characters in life, and so much reason have many, whose piety is far inferior to that of Bernard, to be thankful, that the lot is fallen to them in pleasant places.

From the Epistles let us pass on to other treatises. The five books concerning consideration, addressed to pope Eugenius, but offer themselves to our inspection. Antipontiff was serious in his religious views, he had desired Bernard to send to him some salutary admonitions. The honest plainness of the abbot was at least equal to the unaffected humility of the pontiff. The first book is taken up with salutary cautions against that hardness of heart, which an immensity of business is ever apt to produce. Bernard, who knew the toilsome life of a

* Ep. 234. p. 234.

• 1 Pet. v. 3.

• Cor. i. 31.

• Acts iii. 6.

pope, and the snares with which he was daily encompassed, informs Eugenius, that he was seriously afraid, lest, through a despair of managing a prodigious and unmeasurable course of business with a good conscience, he should be tempted to harden his heart, and deprive himself of all conscientious sensibility. "Begin not," says he, "to ask what is meant by hardness of heart. If you fear it not, you are already under its power. That is a hard heart, which dreads not itself, because it is destitute of feeling. Why do you ask me what it is? ask Pharaoh. No man was ever saved from this curse, but through that divine compassion, which, according to the prophet,^a takes away the stone, and gives an heart of flesh." After a graphical description of the properties of a hard heart, he sums up the view with this sentence.—It neither fears God, nor regards man. See, to what an end these accursed occupations will lead you, if you give yourself wholly to them, leaving nothing of yourself to yourself.—He complains of the usual mode of the pontifical life, incessantly taken up with hearing and deciding causes; whence no room is left for prayer, teaching, and instructing the Church, and meditation on the Scriptures. "The voice of law, indeed, is perpetually sounding in the court, but it is the law of Justinian, not of the Lord." He advises him to pity himself, and not to throw his own soul out of the list of his objects of charity, lest in serving others perpetually, he neglect his own spiritual condition entirely. He directs him to suppress and cut short the endless frauds and cavils of law, with which the courts abounded; to decide in a summary manner on cases evidently plain; to prefer substantial justice to the tedious parade of artificial formalities, and to animadvert with severity on the frauds of advocates and proctors, who made a traffic of iniquity. By this means he would fulfil the duties of his station with uprightness, and redeem time for privacy, contemplation, and prayer.

In all this, I see the honest and pious soul of Bernard struggling against the corruption of the times. But the zeal was ineffectual. If Gregory I. lamented the load of his secular avocations, much more might Eugenius, who lived in an age still more corrupt, and upheld a pontificate still more secularized, and contaminated beyond all bounds by a system of iniquity. Even others less exalted, and less incommoded with the shackles of the world than the pope of Rome, have found, both in civil and ecclesiastical life, the pressure of business too heavy for their minds. If they were conscientious, they were ready to sink under the difficulties; if careless and indifferent, they grew hardened in iniquity, and lost all regard to piety and

virtue. An inferior clerical station is infinitely more desirable in the eyes of a pastor, who means to serve God; and dignities in the Church may attend with profit to the lectures addressed to a pope.

In the beginning of the second book he makes a digression on the ill success of the expedition to the Holy Land, which had been undertaken through the exhortations of himself and of pope Eugenius. Here the eloquence of Bernard seems to be at a stand. He owns, however, with reverence, the unsearchable judgments of God; desires to take shame to himself, rather than that the glory of God should be sullied; and pronounces that man happy, who is not offended at an event so disastrous and unexpected. If the casuistry of Bernard appears feeble in this subject, and expose him to the derision of the profane, his humility, however, and his piety, appear unexceptionable. Recovered, as it were, from the sadness of his reflections on this humiliating occasion, he resumes the discourse on contemplation, presses on the pontiff the duty of examining himself, and, toward the end, lays down rules of holy and charitable conversation, deserving the attention of every pastor.

In the remaining part of this treatise, as well as in that which follows on the office of bishops, the zealous abbot describes and enforces the episcopal duties with his usual vehemence. He is particularly severe on the ambition of ecclesiastics in his time. He describes them as "heaping up benefices on benefices, and restless till they can attain a bishopric, and then an archbishopric. Not, says he, does the aspirant stop there; he goes to Rome, and by supporting expensive friendships and lucrative connections, he looks upward still to the summit of power." How much more usefully might the spirit of Bernard have been employed in the instruction and regulation of the Church, could he have seen, that the idolatrous system, to which his early monastic habits had attached him, admitted no cure; and that a distinct separation, to which men really wise and good are never hasty to advert, was yet, in present circumstances, justifiable and necessary.

The zeal of Bernard appears also very fervent in a small tract concerning conversion, which contained the substance of a sermon preached at Paris before the clergy.^b He insists largely and distinctly on the necessity of divine illumination, in order to genuine conversion. He exhorts his audience to self-examination; and, while he presses them to investigate their own breasts, he

^a It may be proper to mention here a remarkable testimony, which Bernard gives to the upright and disinterested conduct of Eugenius, in his third book on Consolation. Two archbishops of Germany coming to this pope to plead a cause, offered him large presents, which he refused to receive, and obliged them to send back.

^b P. 478.

points out the salutary effects of a just conviction of sin! "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.¹ Who is poorer in spirit than he, who finds in himself no rest, no place where to lay his head? This is the divine economy, that he who is displeased with himself may please God; and he who hates his own habitation, a house of pollution and misery, may be invited to a house of glory; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. No wonder that he finds it hard to believe! Does misery make a man happy? But whoever thou art, in these circumstances, doubt not: not misery, but mercy gives bliss; but then the proper seat of mercy is misery. Thus distress of mind produces humility. Wholesome is that weakness, which needs the hand of the physician, and blessed is that self-dispair, through which God himself will raise and establish the heart. Even here the converted soul shall find the pleasures to which he is called a hundred fold greater than those, which he has relinquished, as well as in the world to come, eternal life. Expect not from us a description of their nature. The Spirit alone reveals them: they are to be known only by experience. Not erudition, but unction teaches here; not knowledge, but inward consciousness comprehends them. That the memory of past sins should remain, and the stain of them be taken away, what power can effect this? The word alone, quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. "Thy sins are forgiven." Let the Pharisee murmur, "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" He, who speaks thus to me, is God. His favour blots out guilt, so that sin shall remain on the memory, but no longer, as before, discolour it. Remove damnation, fear, confusion, as they are removed by full remission; and our past sins will not only cease to hurt us, but will also work together for good, that we may devoutly thank him, who has forgiven them." With such energy of evangelical piety does Bernard preach the doctrines of grace and conversion to the clergy;—an energy sullied, indeed, and obscured with that mysticism, which the solitude of monks always encouraged, yet substantially sound in its nature, and founded on the fundamental truths of the Gospel. Toward the close, he rebukes and exhorts the clergy as such, and bewails that intemperate ambition, which moved, and may I not say, still moves, so many to precipitate themselves into divine functions from secular views. Let a sentence or two on this subject close our review of this sermon, and let those apply the rebuke to themselves, whose practice seems to speak this language, namely, that the ministry is the only office in the world, in which

presumption is a virtue, and modesty a vice. "Men run every where into sacred orders, and catch at an office revered by spirits above, without reverence, without consideration; in whom, perhaps, would appear the foulest abominations, if we were, according to Ezekiel's prophecy, to dig into the walls, and contemplate the horrible things which take place in the house of God.²

The sermons of our author on Solomon's Song, demonstrate that he was well acquainted with vital godliness. In the 36th he shows the various ways by which knowledge puffeth up.³ "Some," says he, "wish to know, merely for the sake of knowing;—a mean curiosity. Some wish to know, that they themselves may be known;—a mean vanity. Some seek for knowledge from lucrative motives;—an avaricious baseness. Some desire to know, that they may edify their neighbour: this is charity. Others, that they may be edified, this is wisdom." On the whole, he owns, that the cultivation of knowledge is good for instruction, but that the knowledge of our own weakness is more useful for salvation.

In the 74th sermon on the same divine book,⁴ Bernard lays open something of his own experience on the operations of the Holy Spirit, and illustrates our Saviour's comparison of them to the wind; "thou knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."⁵ After a preamble, full of cautious modesty, and the most unaffected reverence, he says, "I was sensible, that he was present with me; I remember it after his visits were over; sometimes I had a presentiment of his entrance, but I never could feel his entrance or his exit. Whence he came, and whither he departed; by what way he entered or left me, I confess that I am even now ignorant: and no wonder, for his footsteps are not known."⁶ You ask then, since all his ways are unsearchable, whence could I know that he was present? His presence was living and powerful: it awakened my slumbering soul: it moved, softened, and wounded my heart, which had been hard, stony, and distempered. It watered the dry places, illuminated the dark, opened those which were shut, inflamed the cold, made the crooked straight, and the rough ways plain; so that my soul blessed the Lord, and all that was within me praised his holy name. I had no evidence of the Lord's presence with me by any of the senses; only from the motion of my heart, I understood that he was with me; and, from the expulsion of vices, and the suppression of carnal affections, I perceived the strength of his power: from the discernment and conviction of the very intents of my heart, I admired the depth of his wisdom:

¹ Matt. v. 3.

² Ezek. viii. p. 498.

³ John iii.

⁴ P. 1404.

⁵ P. 1523.

⁶ Ps. lxxvi. 10.

from some little improvement of my temper and conduct I experienced the goodness of his grace: from the renovation of my inward man, I perceived the comeliness of his beauty; and from the joint contemplation of all these things I trembled at his majestic greatness. But because all these things, on his departure, became torpid and cold, just as if you withdrew fire from a boiling pot, I had a signal of his departure. My soul must be sad, till he return; and my heart is again inflamed with his love, and let that be the evidence of his return. With such experience of the divine Word, if I use the language of the spouse, in recalling him, when he shall absent himself; while I live, her word, "return," shall be familiar to me. As often as he leaves me, so often shall he be recalled, that he may restore to me the joy of his salvation; that is, that he may restore to me himself. Nothing else is pleasing, while he is absent, who alone is pleasure: and I pray that he may not come empty, but full of grace and truth, as he was wont to do." Then he goes on to explain the well-tempered mixture of gravity and delight, of fear and joy, of which all true converts are the subjects; and he supports his description by that apposite quotation, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with trembling."¹

It appeared not impertinent to the design of a history like this, to lay before the reader the inmost soul of a Saint of the twelfth century, confessing and describing the vicissitudes of spiritual consolations and declensions, which, with more or less varieties, in all ages of the Church are known to real Christians. I know that much caution is necessary in speaking of them; but if we speak according to the divine oracles, as Bernard seems to do, it should be a small thing with us to be judged of man's judgment. The doctrine of regeneration itself, with all the mixed effects of spiritual health and sickness, in a fallen creature, is foolishness to the natural man.² If any man, however, have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.³ It will be the wisdom of mere nominal Christians, not to deride, but to seek for the Holy Spirit; and while godly souls estimate his presence or his absence, by such marks and effects as Bernard describes, they will not only be free from enthusiasm, but will also make it their constant aim, not to grieve the Spirit of God, by which they are sealed to the day of redemption.

In the 78th sermon on the Canticles, he describes the Church as predestinated before all time, that it should be the spouse of Christ, and supports his observation from the words of St. Paul.⁴ He speaks of the in-

fluence of the Holy Spirit, and of the conversion of sinners as the effect of this predestination. "Yet Emmanuel," says he, "is the Personage, who was of us, and for us was clothed with our curse, and had the appearance, not the reality of our sin."

In a sermon on the beginning of the 91st Psalm, he answers a question, which obviously arises to the mind of a serious person exercised in experimental godliness. Both the question and the answer will deserve to be given in the author's own words. "What is the reason, that though we pray and supplicate incessantly, we cannot attain that abundance of grace, which we desire? Think you that God is become avaricious or indigent, impotent, or inexorable? Far, far from us be the thought: but he knows our frame. We must not therefore, cease from petitioning, because though he gives not to satiety, he gives what is needful for support; though he guards us against excessive heat, he cherishes us, as a mother, with his warmth. As the mother sees the hawk approaching and expands her wings that her young ones may enter and find a safe refuge, so his bosom being prepared, and, as it were, dilated for us, the ineffable kindness of our God is extended over us. This is a dispensation adapted to the infirmity of our condition; even grace itself must be moderated, lest we fall into an undue elevation of mind, or a precipitate indiscretion."

"Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost?" is the serious question, which the Church of England asks of all her candidates for the ministry. Let him, who would answer it conscientiously, ask his own heart, what he feels of Bernard's description, which, if not an accurate answer to the question, may, however, furnish the attentive reader with some salutary contemplations: "He who is called to instruct souls, is called of God, and not by his own ambition; and what is this call, but an inward incentive of love, soliciting us to be zealous for the salvation of our brethren? So often as he, who is engaged in preaching the word, shall feel his inward man to be excited with divine affections, so often let him assure himself that God is there, and that he is invited by him to seek the good of souls. Truly, I love to hear that preacher, who does not move me to applaud his eloquence, but to groan for my sins. Efficacy will be given to your voice, if you appear to be yourself persuaded of that, to which you advise me. That common rebuke will then at least be long not to you;—"thou who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?"⁵

See how divinely he describes the grace

¹ Canticles vii. 13. ² Ps. li. 11.
³ 1 Cor. ii. ⁴ Rom. viii.
⁵ Eph. i. former part. ⁶ 1544.

¹ B. 2. C. 75. *Florum Bernardi*. A small treatise, in which are extracted some of the most beautiful passages of this author.

² 1a Cantic. Sermon. 58. p. 156 *Florum*.

of God in the Gospel. "Happy is he alone, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin. To have him propitious to me, against whom alone I have sinned, sufficient for all my righteousness. Not to impute my sins, is, as it were, to blot out their existence. If my iniquity is great, thy grace is much greater. When my soul is troubled at the view of her sinfulness, I look at thy mercy, and am refreshed. It lies in common; it is offered to all, and he only who rejects it, is deprived of its benefit. Let him rejoice, who feels himself a wretch deserving of perpetual damnation. For the grace of Jesus still exceeds the quantity or number of all crimes. My punishment, says Cain, is too great for me to expect pardon. For he the thought. The grace of God is greater than any iniquity whatever. He is really kind and merciful, plenteous in goodness, ready to forgive. His very nature is goodness, his property is to have mercy. Indeed he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth. But mercy he draws from his own nature; condemnation is a work to which we in a measure compel him. He is, therefore, not called the father of vengeance, but the Father of mercies."

The following thought, concerning temptations, is striking. "In creation, in redemption, and other common benefits, God is common to all; in temptations, the elect have him to themselves. With such special care does he support and deliver, that he may seem, as it were, neglecting all others, to confine his care to the tempted soul."

We have already given a small specimen of his own experience, in regard to the various operations of the Holy Spirit. From different sermons we may now see the practical use, which he makes of the doctrine. "It is a dangerous thing," says he, "to be insensible of the presence, or absence of the Holy Spirit. For how shall his presence be sought, whose absence is not known? and how shall he, who returns to console us, be worthily received, if his presence be not felt? May the unction, therefore, be never removed from us, the unction which teaches us of all things, that when the Holy Spirit comes, he may find us ready. He who walks in the Spirit, never remains in one state. His way is not in himself; but as the Spirit dispenses to him, as he will, now more faintly, now more eagerly, he forgets the things which are behind, and reaches forth to the things which are before. Distrust not, when thou findest weariness and torpor; seek the hand of thy Guide, beseeching him to draw thee, till thou be enabled to run the way of God's commandments. And, on the other hand, beware of presumptuous confidence, when thou walkest in the light of di-

vine consolation, lest, when he withdraw his hand, thou be more dejected than it became a Christian to be."

The divine life was then, it seems, understood in the twelfth century,—that solemn, which is felt in all ages by holy men, which has its foundations in the genuine doctrine of grace, which alone produces true virtue upon earth, which is the comfort of real Christians, and the ridicule of mere philosophers, whether nominally Christians or not, and which will issue in heavenly glory. That after the greatest attainments and the most earnest efforts, a Christian should still feel himself infected with sin, has often been matter of great vexation and surprise to the most pious and the most intelligent persons. Great mistakes have been committed on this subject; some have, at length, induced themselves to believe, that in-dwelling sin has been totally expelled from their hearts; others have given themselves up to unsupportable solitude and dejection. A great part of the mystery of practical godliness lies, no doubt, in the due conception of the one, and in the practical regulation of the heart, concerning it. Let us hear Bernard on this point; he speaks in unison with the sound Christians in all ages; and, what is more, with St. Paul in Rom. vii. "Let no man say in his heart, these are small evils; I care not for them; it is no great matter, if I remain in these venial sins. This is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and condemns impenitence. On the other hand, evil cannot together be eradicated or extirpated from our hearts, while we are in the world. However great thy proficiency, thou art mistaken, if thou think sin to be dead. Whether thou wilt or not, the Jesuits will dwell within thy borders. He may be subdued, not exterminated. Sin, the disease of the soul, cannot be taken away, till we are freed from the body. By the grace of God it may be repressed, that it shall not annoy in us, but is ejected only at death.—In many things we offend all; let no man despise or neglect these evils; nor yet should the Christian be too solicitous concerning them; he will forgive us, even with pleasure, provided we confess our guilt. In these evils of daily incursion, negligence is culpable, and so is immoderate fear; for there is no condemnation to those, who are in Christ Jesus,* and who consent not to the motions of concupiscence. That we may be humbled, the Lord suffers concupiscence itself still to live in us; and grievously to afflict us, that we may feel what grace can do for us, and may always have recourse to his aid.—Such were the humble sentiments of this holy personage concerning this subject, and so equally remote was he from the delusive pride of the

* From various Serms. Flor. 229.

• Flor. 257.

• 1 John ii. 27.

b Id. 44, &c.

• Rom. viii. 1.

• James iii. 2.

• Flor. 378.

Perfectionist, and the flagitious negligence of the Antinomian.

I shall conclude this review of Bernard's works, with a short extract, which expresses the foundation of his Christian hopes; and it is that, in which all real Christians, in all ages, will cordially concur with him. "I consider three things, in which all my hope consists, the love of adoption, the truth of the promise, and the power of performance. Let my foolish heart murmur as much as it please, and say, Who art thou, and how great is that glory, or by what merits dost thou expect to obtain it? I will confidently answer, I know whom I have believed, and I am certain, that he hath adopted me in love; that he is true in promise; that he is powerful to fulfil it; for he can do what he pleaseth. This is the threefold cord, which is not easily broken, which being let down to us from our heavenly country to earth, I pray that we may firmly hold, and may be himself lift us up, and draw us completely to the glory of God, who is blessed for ever."

CHAPTER V.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF BERNARD.

No one of the ancient fathers seems to have had so little justice done to his memory as Bernard. He lived in an age so ignorant and superstitious, that Protestants are ready to ask, can any good thing come out of the twelfth century? It is difficult, indeed, to say, whether he has been more injured by the extravagant encomiums of some, or by the illiberal censures of others. Even the fictitious miracles, of which the wretched accounts of his biographers are full, indirectly asperse his character, and by no uncommon association of ideas, seem to detract all credibility from the best attested narratives of his piety and virtue. While then Papists represent him as an angel, and Protestants as a narrow bigot, or a furious zealot, those, who know nothing more of him than what they have learned from the prejudice of opposite extremes, are tempted to think him an object worthy of contempt, if not of detestation.

The great Roman historian, in a beautiful fragment preserved to us concerning the death of Cicero, observes, that to celebrate his character, as it deserves, a Cicero himself should be found as panegyrist.^a A somewhat similar observation may be made concerning Bernard; and happily his voluminous writings, which have escaped the ravages of time, vindicate his reputation, and exhibit him to us with faithfulness and ac-

curacy. It was necessary to be brief in my extracts; else much more numerous proofs of his genuine piety, humility, and charity, than those which the reader hath already seen, might have been adduced. Nor have I concealed his superstitious turn of mind, and the unhappy prejudices, which induced him to censure some of those, of whom "the world was not worthy," and with whose true character he was unacquainted. He was deeply tinged with a predilection for the Roman hierarchy; he had imbibed most of those errors of his time, which were not directly subversive of the Gospel; and the monastic character, which, according to the spirit of the age, appeared to be the greatest glory, seems to have much eclipsed his real virtues, and prevented his progress in true evangelical wisdom.

But if we strip him of the ascetic vest, and consider the interior endowments, he will appear to have been no mean or ordinary character. His learning was but moderate; his understanding was solid, and his judgment seldom erred in subjects or cases, where the prejudices of the age did not warp the imagination. His genius was truly sublime, his temper sanguine, his mind active and vigorous. The love of God appears to have taken deep root in his soul, and seems to have been always steady, though always ardent. His charity was equal to his zeal; and his tenderness and compassion to Christian brethren went hand in hand with his severity against the heretical, the prophane, and the vicious. In humility, he was truly admirable; he scarce seems to have felt a glimpse of pleasure on account of the extravagant praises every where bestowed upon him. His heart felt dependance on Christ, and his heavenly affections were incontestably strong. He united much true Christian knowledge, with much superstition; and this can hardly be accounted for on any other supposition, than that he was directed by an influence truly divine. For there is not an essential doctrine of the Gospel, which he did not embrace with zeal, defend by argument, and adorn by life. Socinianism, in particular, under God, was by his means nipped in the bud, and prevented from thriving in the Christian world. Such was Bernard, who is generally called the last of the fathers.

The accounts of his death, considered as compositions, are no less disgusting to a taste of tolerable correctness, than those of his life. While his friends admired him as an angel, he felt himself, by nature, a sinful fallen creature. He was about sixty-three years old; when he died of a disease in the stomach. A letter, which he dictated to a friend, a very few days before his decease, will be worth our attention as a genuine monument of that simplicity, modesty, and piety, which

^a De Evang. Ser. 3.

^b Cicerone quidem laudatore opus esset. Liv. fragm.

had adorned his conversation. "I received your love, with affection, I cannot say with pleasure; for what pleasure can there be to a person in my circumstances, replete with bitterness? To eat nothing solid, is the only way to preserve myself tolerably easy. My sensitive powers admit of no further measure. Sleep hath departed from my eyes, and prevented the least intermission of my pain. Stomachic weakness is, as it were, the sum total of my afflictions. By day and night I receive a small portion of liquids. Every thing solid, the stomach rejects. The very scanty supply, which I now and then receive, is painful? but perfect emptiness would be still more so. If now and then I take in a larger quantity, the effect is most distressing. My legs and feet are swollen, as in a dropsy. In the midst of these afflictions, that I may hide nothing from an anxious friend, in my inner man—I speak as a vulgar person—the spirit is ready, though the flesh be weak. Pray ye to the Saviour, who willeth not the death of a sinner, that he would not delay my timely exit, but that still he would guard it. Fortify with your prayers a poor unworthy creature, that the enemy who lies in wait, may find no place where he may fix his tooth, and inflict a wound. These words I have dictated, but in such a manner, that ye may know my affection by a hand well known to you." Such were the dying circumstances of this excellent Saint. So peculiarly were they disposed, that they seemed to rebuke the ignorant admiration of his friends; and thus, through faith and patience, did he, at length, inherit the promises.

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

This may, in a great measure, be collected, so far as the Latin Church is concerned, from the copious account, which has been given of Bernard. Of the Greek Church hardly any thing occurs which properly falls within the design of this history. Superstition, idolatry, frivolous contentions, and metaphysical niceties, attended with a lamentable want of true piety and virtue, form almost the whole of the religious phenomena in the east.

In this chaos of the Church, I can only mention a few facts and circumstances, which may throw some light on its general state; and they shall be such as have not been considered in the history of Bernard, nor directly relate to the Waldenses, whose affairs commenced in the latter part of this century, but will deserve a distinct narration.

Just at the close of the foregoing century; pope Urban held a synod of one hundred and fifty bishops, in order to promote the Crusades, and emboldened the Christian world to concur in supporting the same cause. He died in the year 1099, and Jerusalem was taken by the crusaders in the same year.¹ The pale of the visible Church was extended by the conquests of the western warriors, and several episcopal-Sees were again formed in regions, whence the light of the Gospel had first arisen to bless mankind. But these were of short duration; and, what is much more material to be observed, while they continued, they gave no evidence, that I can find, of the spirit of true religion. This is a circumstance, which throws a very unpleasant shade on the whole character of the fanatical war, which at that time agitated both Europe and Asia. I have exculpated the western Christians from the charge of positive injustice in undertaking it; in every other light it deserves much of the asperity of the censure, with which modern authors, in general agree to treat it. Among a thousand evils which it produced, or at least encouraged, this was one, namely, that indulgences were now diffused by the popes through Europe, for the purpose of promoting what they called the holy war. These had indeed been sold before by the inferior dignitaries of the Church, who, for money, remitted the penalties imposed on transgressors: they had not, however, pretended to abolish the punishments, which await the wicked in a future state. This impiety was reserved to the pope himself, who dared to usurp the authority, which belongs to God alone. The corruption having once taken place, remained and even increased from age to age, till the time of the reformation. It is needless to say how subversive of all piety and virtue this practice must have been. That the Romanists did really promote this impious traffic, is but too evident from their own writers.¹ Hence the strict propriety of St. Paul's representation of the man of sin, AS SHEWING HIMSELF THAT HE IS GOD,² is evinced; hence, the characters of those, who opposed the power and doctrine of popery in those times, receive the most ample vindication, and hence the merit of the reformation itself may, in a great measure, be appreciated. I only add, that the whole discipline of the Church was now dissolved, and men, who had means to purchase a license to sin, were emboldened to let loose the reins of vice, and follow, at large, their own desires and imaginations.

Nor were these evils compensated by some other circumstances, which tended to pro-

¹ Baronius, Cent. XII.

² See Mosheim, Cent. XII. p. 535. Qu. Edit. Morinus, Simon, and Mabillon, are the popish authors, who are not ashamed to vindicate this system of iniquity.

³ 2 Thess. ii.

note the revival of learning, in this age. Gratian, a native of Turcan and a monk of Bologna, made the famous collection of canon laws, and published them in 1151. His work was much facilitated by the discovery of the pandect of the emperor Justinian, which took place in 1137.¹ Ecclesiastical causes were henceforward tried by the canon law. The degrees of bachelor, licentiate, and doctor, degrees mentioned by no writer before the time of Gratian, were instituted by pope Eugenius III. the disciple of Bernard, to encourage the study of this science. But they were soon after introduced at Paris by Peter Lombard, who was called the master of the sentences, and were bestowed on students of divinity, as well as of law. For Lombard was supposed to have performed the same service to divinity, which Gratian his contemporary had done to law. Paris and Bologna, the former in divinity, and the latter in law, were now looked on as the greatest seminaries in Europe. In this revival of learning, our own island also bore a part. The university of Oxford, which had been founded in the time of Alfred, and had suffered much from the ravages of the Danes, came to a considerable degree of eminence in this century. The learning, as well as the impiety of the Continent, passed into England, and we shall shortly see a dreadful instance of the effects of both appearing in the university last mentioned. For while the real word of God was generally neglected, and the salutary doctrine of the Gospel was buried in darkness, the literary improvements of the times might sharpen the intellectual faculties, but could produce no benign effects on the manners of mankind. To finish this brief detail of the progress of learning, I shall add, that Cambridge had begun to be a seminary of learning, some little time after Oxford, but in that view had been quite oppressed by the incursions of the Danes.—It revived, however, in some degree, about the year 1109, when Gislebert, with three other monks, was sent by the abbot of Croyland to his manor of Cottenham, near Cambridge. These monks went every day to Cambridge, where they hired a barn, as a convenient place for public lectures. One read grammar in the morning, a second read logic at one o'clock, and a third, at three in the afternoon, gave lectures on rhetoric from Tully and Quintilian. Gislebert himself preached on Sundays and other holidays. The barn was soon found insufficient to contain the auditors; and, therefore, accommodations were provided for the labours of these men in different parts of the town. Such is the account which Peter of Blois gives of the infant state of learning in the university of Cambridge.

The laudable passion for intellectual improvement was strong in this century. In the room of the fathers succeeded the schoolmen, whose theology was founded by Peter Lombard. A metaphysical subtilty pervaded their investigations, and they were idolized by the ignorant, among whom should be ranked the nobility of that age, almost as much as the plebeians. The human mind, however, by exercise recovered a new tone and vigour; but learning could not communicate grace, nor even enable men to see the folly of enslaving themselves to the popedom. The influence of the bishop of Rome grew prodigious: the emperors of Germany trembled under the rod; and some of the bravest and wisest of the English princes were found unequal to a contest with the hierarchy. But to dwell on these scenes, would be to forsake the path of Church-history.

Where THEN was the Church of Christ, and what was its condition? In the general appearance of national religion she was not to be discovered. God had, however, his SECRET ONES. There might be, and probably there were, in vulgar life, various persons too poor and too insignificant to be regarded in history, who feared God and served him in the Gospel of his Son, but whom an humble station in society secured from persecution. There were also here and there some of the recluses, who practised something better than superstition. The story of Bernard has given us an illustrious instance. In the west, we have seen also the state of the Cathari, who formed religious societies among themselves. These increased exceedingly, and assuming a new name much better known in the latter part of the century,^m were exposed to the unrighteous indignation of the then reigning powers, both in church and state. The account of this persecution will demand our particular attention, when we come to the next century. Thus the Church of Christ had a real existence in the west, and shone as a light in a dark place. In the east it is extremely difficult to discover the least vestiges of genuine piety. It is probable, however, that the Church existed among the remains of the Paulicians. For in the year 1118, Alexius Comnenus, who had zealously persecuted this people in the latter end of the foregoing century, burned a supposed Manichee, who was charged with maintaining all the absurdities of Manes. We have the account from the female historian, his own daughter Anna Comnena, who every where idolizes the character of her father.ⁿ The supposed heretic, however, it ought to be known, rejected the worship of images as idolatry;^o a circumstance, which at least affords a strong presumption in favour of his Christian character. The reader is hence,

¹ Mosheim, Cent. XII. p. 567. Bowyer's lives of popes, Vol. VI. p. 68. De Feb, Cent. XII. Chap. XVII.

^m Waldenses. ⁿ Anna Comnena, B. XV.
^o Baroc. Cent. XII.

led to believe it not improbable, that there were even then some relics of a Church of God in the east. If he complain that the evidence is scanty, I can only lament, that history affords no more. And if he recollect the account given of the Cathari in the memoirs of Bernard, and consider them as properly belonging to this place, he will see, that the prophecy of Christ concerning his Church, "that the gates of hell should never prevail against it," had its real completion even in the dark times which we are reviewing.

It is, however, no small consolation to the mind of a true believer, that the most disastrous, as well as the most glorious scenes of the Church, are predicted in Scripture. The evidence of prophecy constantly accompanies the light of history, and "behold I have told you before," is the voice of our Saviour, which we hear in every age. In a council held at London in 1108, in the reign of our Henry I. a decree was issued against clerks, who should cohabit with women.^b This council did not mean to give an attestation to the truth of the prophecy of St. Paul, concerning the apostacy of the latter days, one circumstance of which was the prohibition of marriage,^c but they fulfilled the prophecy in the clearest manner. The voices of natural conscience and of common sense were, however, by no means altogether silenced during this gloomy season. Fluentius, bishop of Florence,^d taught publicly, that Antichrist was born, and come into the world; on which account pope Paschal II. held a council there in the year 1105, reprimanded the bishop, and enjoined him silence on that subject. Even Bernard himself inveighed so strongly against the popes and the clergy, that nothing but the obstinate prejudices of education prevented him from seeing the whole truth in this matter. It was natural for men, who revered the Scriptures, and who compared what they read of Antichrist with what they saw in the Church of Rome, to express some suspicions, that the prophecy was then fulfilling, though the glare of fictitious holiness, which covered the popedom, prevented them from beholding their object with perspicuity.

Our own island was rapidly advancing all this century into a state of deplorable subjection to the Roman See. Men of solid understanding, like our Henry II. lamented, struggled, and resisted, but with little effect. They felt the temporal oppression of ecclesiastical tyranny, while they were perfectly regardless of their own spiritual misery, and even aided the Court of Rome in the persecution of real Christians. That same Henry II. who made so firm a stand against papal encroachments in civil matters, in the twenty-

fourth year of his reign, joined with the French king in persecuting the Cathari of Toulouse, who were injuriously denominated Arians;^e and, while he abused and perverted one of the finest understandings by a life of ambition, and lewdness, and by supporting idolatrous religion, he himself was exposed to the severest sufferings from the papal usurpations. One instance of his barbarity will deserve to be distinctly related.

Thirty men and women, who were Germans, appeared in England in the year 1183, and were afterwards brought before a council of the clergy at Oxford. Gerard their teacher, a man of learning, said, that they were Christians, and believed the doctrine of the Apostles. They expressed an abhorrence of the doctrine of purgatory, of prayers for the dead, and of the invocation of Saints. Henry, in conjunction with the council, ordered them to be branded with a hot iron on the forehead, to be whipped through Oxford, to have their clothes cut short by their girdles, and to be turned into the open fields; and he likewise forbade any persons, under severe penalties, to shelter or relieve them. As it was the depth of winter, they all lost their lives through cold and hunger.^f They had made one female convert in England, who, through fear of similar punishment, recanted. The whole number of the Germans remained, however, patient, serene, and composed, repeating, "Blessed are those, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Their teacher Gerard, that he might be distinguished from the rest, had an additional stigma on his chin.

What a darkness must at that time have filled this island! A wise and sagacious king, a renowned university, the whole body of the clergy and laity, all united in expelling Christ from their coasts! Brief as is the account of the martyrs, it is sufficiently evident that they were the martyrs of Christ. Driven most probably from home by the rage of persecution, they had brought the light and power of the Gospel with them into England; and so totally senseless and corrupt was our nation, that none received it. It deserves to be noticed, that England was afterwards for a long time exposed to suffer more severely, than most other nations, from the exactions of the popedom.

Mr. Berington observes, on occasion of this story, that none but a hero or a madman was at that time qualified to be a reformer. But a true reformer need not to be either the one or the other. A man of understanding, who fears God, and speaks the words of soberness, if influenced by the Spirit of God, is fitted to reform mankind.

^b Baroni. Cent. XII.

^c 1 Tim. iv.

^d See Sp. Newton on the prophecies, Vol. III. p. 167.

^e Hoveden, p. 387.

^f Neubrig. Prompt. Collect. See Henry's History of England. Vol. III. p. 240.

The contention between king Henry and Becket is well known. I have nothing to say of it, except that the whole affair is foreign to my purpose. There is no evidence that a spirit of true religion influenced either the king or the archbishop.

Antichrist, indeed, reigned calm and victorious throughout Europe. Nevertheless, even in Italy itself, some suspicions of his existence appeared. Joachim, abbot of Calabria, was a man renowned for learning and piety, and perhaps very deservedly. This man asserted that Antichrist was born in the Roman state, and would be exalted to the apostolic See." Our king Richard I. being at Messina in Sicily, going upon his expedition to the Holy Land, sent for this Joachim, and with much satisfaction heard him explain the Book of the Revelation, and discourse of Antichrist. Mr. Berington gives a ludicrous account of this interview between the king and the abbot; and observes, that the "bishops who were present, and Richard, and Joachim, were equally intelligent in the mysteries of the Evangelist with any other interpreters from that day." This gentleman is a lively, agreeable writer, and has exerted a capacity, learning, and industry, to which I have been obliged on several occasions. But the rude treatment of any part of the word of God deserves to be rebuked, whether he, who is guilty of it, be a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, or a sceptic in religion. I doubt not but some of his readers, who never examined the subject with the least attention, will be gratified with the plesantry of his remark. But let them be told, that part of the Apocalypse is very intelligible, even at present; and that all of it will probably be so before the end of time.—And is not all Scripture said to be profitable?" It behoved not a man professing Christianity, to throw out innuendoes, which might have been expected only from an avowed infidel. Has the author ever examined with care, the writings of expositors on the Apocalypse? Did he ever attend to Mr. Mede's elaborate and learned works on the subject? Did Sir Isaac Newton's observations on the Apocalypse ever fall into his hands? or, to come to later times, has he ever studied the works of bishop Newton, bishop Hurd, or the late bishop Halifax? Let him attend to any one of these, and having digested his scheme, let him then say, with a sneer if he can, that our ignorant king Richard I. was as intelligent an expositor as he.

If this same Richard had been as earnest in studying the Scriptures, as he was in conducting his romantic expedition into the Holy Land, by comparing the Apocalyptic

prophecies with the treatment which he himself received from the pope, he might have understood that the bishop of Rome was Antichrist. For, in a bull dated 1197, Innocent III. declared, that it was not fit, that any man should be invested with authority, who did not revere and obey the holy See. In another bull, addressed to Richard, he told him, that if he opposed the execution of the decrees of the Apostolic See, he would soon convince him, how hard it was to kick against the pricks. In another bull, he declared, that he would not endure the least contempt of himself, or of God, whose place he held on earth, but would punish every disobedience without delay, and without respect of persons; and would convince the whole world, that he was determined to act like a sovereign." The "lion hearted" Richard obeyed his decrees, and gave up his opposition, in the cause which he had contested. Innocent, indeed, reigned in England with a power little less than despotic. This was the pope, who confirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation in the grossest sense, who reduced the two succeeding princes John and Henry III. into a state of the lowest vassalage to himself, and who enriched his creatures with the treasures of England, almost entirely at pleasure.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

THE pale of the visible Church was still farther extended in this century among the idolatrous nations; and, though the methods of propagating divine truth were too often unchristian, some missionaries seem to have been actuated by an apostolical spirit. The articles under this head are only few, but will deserve the reader's attention.

Boleslaus, duke of Poland, having taken Stetin the capital of Pomerania, by storm, and laid waste the country with fire and sword, compelled the remaining inhabitants to submit at discretion. What right he had to make war on the Pomeranians at all, and if he had a right, how far he confined himself within the bounds of justice and humanity, are inquiries not easy to be answered, on account of the scantiness of our information. From such inauspicious beginnings, however, Pomerania was introduced to an acquaintance with Christianity. The conqueror endeavoured, for three years, to procure pastors and teachers from his own dominions, to instruct his new subjects; but could find none. He then engaged Otho, bishop of Bamberg, in the work. The duke of Pomerania met the bishop on his approach, and received him

* Hoveden, p. 651. Collier's Eccl. Hist. B. VI. p. 401.

* Hist. of Henry II. &c. p. 375. † 1 Tim. III. 16.

* Gervas Chronicle. See Henry's 3d Vol. of History of England.

with much respect. The savage inhabitants, however, were with difficulty prevented from murdering him. Otho was firm, and by Christian zeal, patience, and meekness, laboured to efface the disadvantageous impressions, which the military executions of Boleslaus could not fail to make on their minds. The duchess of Pomerania, with her female attendants, received the Gospel. So did the duke with his companions, and he gave this evidence of sincerity, that he was prevailed on by the instructions of Otho to dismiss his concubines, who were twenty-four in number. This missionary was afterwards fiercely assaulted by some of the inhabitants, and escaped with great difficulty. But he bore the injury so meekly, and still persevered in his labours with such evident marks of probity and charity, that he at length established the form of Christianity among them. He had entered on his mission in the year 1124, and from his success was styled the Apostle of the Pomeranians.* After he had carried the Gospel into Noim and other remote districts, he returned to the care of his own flock at Bamberg, where he died in 1139.† That the work, however, was very slight among this people, appeared too plainly by the event. The Pomeranians soon after ejected the Christian pastors, and re-established the idolatry of their ancestors.

The inhabitants of Rugen, an island which lies in the neighbourhood of Pomerania, were remarkable for their obstinate opposition to Christianity. Eric, king of Denmark, subdued them, and, among other conditions of peace, imposed on them the necessity of receiving his religion. But they soon relapsed into the idolatry of their ancestors. At length Waldemar, king of Denmark, having subjected them again by his arms to the Danish crown, obliged them to deliver up to him their idol, called Swanterwith, an account of which we have seen in the history of the tenth century. Waldemar ordered it to be hewn in pieces, and burned. He compelled the vanquished also to deliver to him all their sacred money: he released the Christian captives whom they held in slavery, and converted the lands, which had been assigned to the pagan priests, to the support of a Christian ministry. He did also something, which was of a more salutary nature and tendency, whatever were his own motives of conduct. He furnished the ignorant savages with pastors and teachers. Among these shone Absalom, archbishop of Lunden, by whose pious labours, at length, the Gospel received an establishment in this island, which had so long baffled every attempt to evangelize it. Absalom ought to be classed among those

genuine benefactors of mankind, who were willing to spend and be spent for the good of souls. Even Jaremar, the prince of Rugen, received the Gospel with great alacrity, and not only taught his wayward subjects by his life and example, but also by his useful instructions and admonitions. Sometimes he employed menaces, but to what degree, and with what circumstances, I know not. Certain it is, that the people of Rugen from that time were in some sense, at least, evangelized. No people had ever shewn a more obstinate aversion to the doctrines of Christianity. Nor were the military proceedings of Eric and Waldemar calculated to soften their animosity. In this article, however, as in the last, the characters of the missionaries ought to be distinguished from those of the princes; for, in the accounts of both the missionaries there appears very good evidence of a genuine propagation of godliness. These events in Rugen took place about the year 1168.‡ When I distinguish the character of the princes, from that of the missionaries, I am by no means certain, that the conduct of the former was unjustifiable. The people of Rugen were a band of pirates and robbers; and it is not improbable, but that the right of self-preservation might authorise the Danish expeditions.

The Finlanders were of the same character with the people of Rugen, and infested Sweden with their incursions. Eric, king of the last mentioned country, vanquished them in war, and is said to have wept, because his enemies died unbaptized. As soon as he was master of Finland, he sent Henry, bishop of Upsal, to evangelize the barbarians. The success of the missionary was great, and he is called the apostle of the Finlanders, though he was murdered at length by some of the refractory people. How far the censure of Mosheim, on his severity to them, may be well founded, I cannot decide. The man seems, however, to have been pious and to have had good intentions. The laudable conduct of his sovereign also deserves to be celebrated. Eric was excellent both as a Christian and a king. His piety provoked the derision of some impious malcontents, by whom he was attacked, while employed in public worship. The remainder of the festival, said he, I shall observe elsewhere. It was the feast of the Ascension, which he was celebrating. He went out alone to meet the murderers, that he might prevent the effusion of blood, and he died recommending his soul to God. He was slain in 1151; and his tomb still remains, at Upsal, undefaced.§ It may be proper to add, that Henry was an Englishman, who had taken considerable pains among the barbarous nations, before the pe-

* Cent. Magd. Cent. XII. p. 16.

† Baronius, Cent. XII. See Magd. Cent.

‡ Butler, Vol. VII.

§ Mosheim, XII. Cent. 351. Cent. Magd. XII. Cent. 12.

• Butler, Vol. X.

• Mosheim, Cent. XII. 532. Butler, Vol. V.

riod of his labours in Finland, and that he was stoned to death at the instigation of a murderer, whom he had endeavoured to reclaim by his censures. His death happened in the same year as that of his royal master.^c This person is highly extolled by John Olavi, in his work, *De rebus Gothiciis*.^f

The Slavonians were remarkably averse to the Gospel of Christ, and much exercised the patience and charity of Vicelinus, who preached thirty years in Holstia and the neighbouring parts. He was at length appointed bishop of Oldenburg, which See was afterwards transferred to Lubec: and the fruits of his ministry were solid and glorious.^g He died in 1154. All the accounts of antiquity are full of the praises of Vicelinus; and his character is briefly, but very strongly celebrated by Mosheim, with such unqualified commendations, that I cannot but wish that very learned historian had favoured us with an abridgment of his life and actions, taken from the sources of information, which he quotes, but which seem to us inaccessible. I have consulted the Centuriators, and find matter there sufficient to excite, but not to satisfy our curiosity. The little to be collected from them shall be mentioned in the next chapter. And here is an instance of that, which I have had but too frequent occasion to remark, namely, an extreme scantiness of information on subjects most worthy of our researches. How willingly would the evangelical reader have excused the omission of many pages in Mosheim, if he had gratified us with an orderly account of one of the best and wisest Christian missionaries of the age.^h

The propagation of religion in Livonia will not deserve any detail. It took place in the latter part of this century: violent and secular methods were principally used, and the wretched inhabitants were compelled to receive baptism;ⁱ but I know no fruits that appeared in this century worthy of the Christian name.

CHAPTER VIII.

WRITERS AND EMINENT PERSONS IN THIS CENTURY.

Bernard far outshines all the other Christian characters of the age. A very brief survey, however, of some who had the greatest reputation for piety, may not be improper.

Meginher, archbishop of Treves, is a character, of whom it were to be wished, we had

a more distinct account. He inveighed against the luxury and sensuality of his clergy, and so provoked their resentment, that he was obliged to undertake a journey to Rome in his own defence. By the treachery of his own clergy, he was intercepted on the road, and died in prison at Parma in the year 1130.^j If we had the particulars of these transactions, it is probable, that he would appear to have resembled Chrysostom in his integrity, as well as in his sufferings. Meginher deserves, however, to be mentioned, because his case evinces how unsafe it was in those days to defend Christian piety, even in the midst of the visible Church of Christ.

About the same time a presbyter named Arnulph, came to Rome, and faithfully preached against the vices of the clergy. He was himself a man of unblamable life and conversation, and zealously laboured to induce the pastors of the Church to imitate the simplicity, and disinterestedness of the primitive Christians. He seems to have foreseen that he should suffer for righteousness sake. "I know," said he publicly, "that ye seek my life.—Ye despise me and your Creator, who redeemed you by his only begotten Son.—Nor is it to be wondered at, that ye should kill me a sinful man, who speaks to you the truth, since, if St. Peter himself were to rise from the dead, and rebuke your multiplied enormities, ye would not spare him." Arnulph was secretly murdered, and appears to have been a faithful martyr.^k

The orthodox sentiments of the Godhead and manhood of Jesus Christ, and the influence of both natures in the redemption, were clearly and soundly vindicated by Ricardus in a treatise concerning the Incarnation.^l

Rupert, in this century, writing on the Gospel of St. John, observes, on occasion of our Lord's declaring in the xivth chapter of St. John, that the world neither see nor know the Holy Spirit: "that they see him not, arises from their unbelief; that they know him not, proceeds from their pride. Infidelity regards nothing but what is present; and pride approves not of such a comforter, nay, reckons the life of those who seek his consolations to be madness, and their end to be without honour."

Peter Alphonsus, a Jew, was converted in the year 1106, in the forty-fourth year of his age. Being severely censured by his countrymen, he published a dialogue against the Jews, which seems to have been no contemptible defence of Christianity against his countrymen.^m This man was eminent for sacred and prophane literature, and it is hoped, became a real ornament to Christianity.ⁿ

Whoever in this degenerate age acted faithfully in the ministry, exposed himself to

^a His life was written by Benzellus Monum. Sues. p. 33. Butler, Vol. II.

^b B. 19. C. 3. See Baron. Cent. XII.

^c Baron. Cent. XII.

^d See Cent. Magd. 16. Mosheim, Cent. XII. 554.

The authors quoted by Mosheim are Cimbrici literati of M. Nerves, and the Res Hamburg. of Lambecius.

^e Cent. Magd.

^f Cent. Magd. Cent. XII. 23. Id. 98.

^g Du Pin, 170.

^h Cent. Magd. 23.

ⁱ Cent. Magd. 704.

imminent danger. This was the case of Henricus, bishop of Meutz. He was a rare pattern of meekness, integrity, and charity. But, through the unjust accusation of his elergy, he was deprived of his bishopric by the authority of two cardinals at Worms. "I know," said he, "if I were to appeal to the pope, it would be in vain. I appeal, therefore, to Jesus Christ, the just judge of quick and dead, who neither accepts persons, nor receives bribes as you do." After his expulsion from his See, which he had held near nine years, he retired to a monastery in Saxony, and lived in privacy and retirement, but without taking upon him the monastic habit, and died in 1153.*

Vicelinus, before mentioned, was born at an obscure town on the banks of the Weser, in the diocese of Minden. Having met with a sarcastic reproof from a priest, in his youth, on account of his indolence and ignorance, he was roused to pay the greatest attention to the cultivation of his understanding. Many in that age were equally studious; but Vicelinus was singularly eminent in directing his studies to practical purposes, and to the cultivation of genuine piety, and in avoiding the miserable strife of metaphysical subtilties, to which men of learning were then generally addicted. The scene of his evangelical labours was Holstein, in the kingdom of Denmark: there he taught men to turn from idols to the living God; for the Holsatians had known nothing of Christianity, but the name: they worshipped groves, fountains, and various vanities. The success of Vicelinus seems to have been solid and lasting: many pagans all around, and particularly the Vandals, were induced to receive Christianity. After he had laboured thirty years in Holstein and the neighbouring parts, he was appointed bishop of Oldenburg, in the year 1128. He still continued near six years in the same course of evangelical labour, in which he had persevered so long before, but was at length confined to his bed by a palsy for upwards of two years, and died in the year 1154.^p

Anselm of Havelburg was a bishop of some literary reputation, and flourished in the middle of this century. The only thing, which I find remarkable concerning him, and it gives a strong presumption in favour of his piety or understanding, or both, is this, that he saw and censured the pharisaism of the

monkish institutions. He declared, that there were many in his time, successively rising up, who disapproved of the vanity and novelty^q of monastic orders.

It may be proper just to mention Peter; abbot of Cluny, surnamed the venerable. That so ignorant and so trifling a writer should have been honoured with a title so magnificent, is one of the strongest marks of the low state of religious knowledge in general at that time. He takes large pains to vindicate the manners and customs of his monastery against objections; and in doing this, he is so verbose and circumstantial, that he may seem to have placed the essence of Christianity in frivolous punctilios and insignificant ceremonies. This is he, who received Peter Abelard in his afflictions with great humanity, and who consoled Ekkehard after the death of that ingenious heretic, by sending to her, at her request, the form of Abelard's absolution,^r which that unhappy woman inscribed on his sepulchre. I can only say, in the praise of Peter, that his manners were gentle, his temper very mild and humane, and that he had what in common life is concisely called a good heart.

I add Peter Lombard to the list of eminent persons of this century, though I know nothing interesting to relate of him, further than what has already been mentioned. Subtlety of argumentation was his fort: I find no evidence of his genuine humility and piety.

Isidore of Madrid, a poor labourer of this century, was canonized by papal authority: The account of him is too scanty, to enable us to form a proper estimate of his real worth and qualifications. There must, however, have been something singularly striking in his character; as here we have one canonization at least, which could not be the result of interested adulation. His master, John de Vargas, allowed him daily to attend the public offices of the Church; and he, by early rising, took care that the master lost nothing of his due services: he relieved the poor by the produce of his labours: he was humble, laborious, and just; and died near sixty years old, in the exercises of benevolence. What a Saint! if, as may be hoped, he was principled by the faith of Jesus, and renounced, from the heart, his own righteousness as filthy rags!

* Du Pin, 710.

^p Cent. Magd. Cent. XII. 748.

^q Id. 761.

^r Baron. Cent. XII.

^r Du Pin, Cent. XII. p. 79.

CENTURY XIII.

CHAPTER I.

PETER WALDO.

THE reader will recollect the account, which has been given of the Cathari, who were evidently a people of God in the former part of the last century. In the latter part of the same century, they received a great accession of members from the learned labours and godly zeal of Peter Waldo. In the century before us, they were gloriously distinguished by a dreadful series of persecution, and exhibited a spectacle to the world, both of the power of divine grace, and of the malice and enmity of the world against the real Gospel of Jesus Christ. I purpose to represent in one connected view, the history of this people to the time of the Reformation, and a little after. The spirit, doctrine, and progress of the Waldenses, will be more clearly understood by this method, than by broken and interrupted details; and the thirteenth century seems the most proper place in which their story should be introduced.

The Cathari, whom Bernard so unhappily misrepresented, were peculiarly numerous in the vallies of Piedmont. Hence the name Vandois or Vallenses was given to them. particularly to those who inhabited the vallies of Lucerne and Angrogne. A mistake arose from similarity of names, that Peter Waldo or Waldo, was the first founder of these churches. For the name Vallenses being easily changed into Waldenses, the Romanists improved this very easy and natural mistake into an argument against the antiquity of these Churches, and denied that they had any existence till the appearance of Waldo. During the alterations of the Papists and Protestants, it was of some consequence that this matter should be rightly stated; because the former denied, that the doctrines of the latter had any existence till the days of Luther. But from a just account of the subject it appeared, that the real Protestant doctrines existed during the dark ages of the Church, even long before Waldo's time; the proper founder of them being Claudius of Turin, the Christian hero of the sixth century.*

About the year 1160, the doctrine of transubstantiation, which, some time afterwards, Innocent III. confirmed in a very solemn manner, was required by the court of Rome to be acknowledged by all men. A very pernicious practice of idolatry was connected with the reception of this doctrine. Men fell down before the consecrated host and worshipped it as God; and the novelty, absurdity, and impiety of this abomination very much struck the minds of all men, who were not dead to a sense of true religion. At this time Peter Waldo, a citizen of Lyons, appeared very courageous in opposing the invention; though it is evident from the very imperfect account, which we have of the man, that it was not one single circumstance alone which influenced him in his views of reformation. It was the fear of God, in general, as a ruling principle in his own soul, and an alarming sense of the wickedness of the times, which, under the divine influence, moved him to oppose with courage the dangerous corruptions of the Hierarchy.

A providential event had given the first occasion to this reformer's concern for religion. Being assembled with some of his friends, and after supper conversing and refreshing himself among them, one of the company fell down dead on the ground, to the amazement of all that were present. From that moment, it pleased God, that Waldo should commence a serious inquirer after divine truth. This person was an opulent merchant of Lyons, and as his concern of mind increased, and a door of usefulness to the souls of men was more and more set open before him, he abandoned his mercantile occupation, distributed his wealth to the poor, and exhorted his neighbours to seek the bread of life. The poor, who flocked to him, that they might partake of his alms, received from him the best instructions, which he was capable of communicating; and they revered the man, to whose liberality they were so much obliged, while the great and the rich both hated and despised him.

Waldo himself, however, that he might teach others effectually, needed himself to be taught; and where was instruction to be found? Men at that day might run here

* Dr. Afliz, in his history of the ancient Church of Piedmont, has done justice to this subject. I have already made use of his learned labours, and shall again avail myself of them; though my chief source of information concerning this people will be their history, written by John Paul Perrin of Lyons, who wrote in 1618. I could have wished, that his accounts of internal religion had

been more full, even though those of the persecutions had been more scanty. But there arose no writers of eminence among the Waldenses; and Perrin's history is in a great measure collected from the records of the process and proceedings against the Waldensian Churches, which were in the offices of the archbishops of Ambrun, and which were very providentially preserved. I shall not quote him in any particular passage, because I make such large use of his history in general.

and there for meat, and not be satisfied. In some convents, among the many who substituted formality for power, there were particular persons, who "held the **HEAD**," and drew holy nourishment from him. But a secular man, like Waldo, would not easily find them out, and were he to have met with some of them, their prejudiced attachments to the See of Rome would either have prevented them from imparting to the merchant of Lyons the food which was necessary for his soul, or have led him into a course of life, by which he would, after their example, have buried his talent in a napkin. The conduct of Bernard, one of the most eminent and best of them, too plainly shews, that one of these two things would have been the case. But Bernard was gone to his rest not long before this time, and seems not to have left any monastic brother behind him at all to be compared with himself. Divine Providence reserved better things for Waldo: darkened and distressed in mind and conscience, he knew that the Scriptures were given as infallible guides, and he thirsted for those sources of instruction, which at that time were in a great measure a sealed book in the Christian world. To men who understood the Latin tongue, they were accessible. But how few were these compared with the bulk of mankind! The Latin Vulgate Bible was the only edition of the sacred Book at that time in Europe; and the languages then in common use, the French and others, however mixed with the Latin, were, properly speaking, by this time separate and distinct from it. It is a certain mark of the general negligence of the clergy in those ages, that no provision was made for the ignorant in this respect, though I do not find that there existed any penal law to forbid the reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. It is certain that Waldo found means to diffuse the precious gift of the Scriptures among the people. But different accounts are given us of his of manner doing it." His enemies assert, that some books of Scripture, having been translated from Latin into French, he assumed the office of an apostle to himself. In particular, Reinerius says, "Being somewhat learned, he taught the people the text of the New Testament." This looks so like a reluctant confession of his learning and knowledge, that I am tempted to believe the words of Matthias Illyricus, who observes: "His kindness to the poor being diffused, his love of teaching and their love of learning growing stronger and stronger, greater crowds came to him, and he explained the Scriptures. He was himself a man of learning, so I understand from some old parchments, nor was he obliged to employ others to translate for him, as his enemies affirm." Another anonymous author

tells us, likewise, that Waldo made a collection in the vulgar tongue of the passages of the ancient fathers, that he might satisfy his disciples by the testimony of the doctors against their adversaries.

But whether Waldo himself entirely performed the work, or encouraged others to do it, or what is most probable, executed it himself with the assistance of others, it is certain, that the Christian world in the west was indebted, under Providence, to him for the first translation of the Bible into a modern tongue, since the time that the Latin had ceased to be a living language. A most valuable gift! True reformers have ever been remarkable for a desire and endeavour to communicate knowledge among the ignorant: and it is a standing reproach to the whole popish system, that however pious and scripturally judicious some individuals of that Church have been, no pains at all were taken by it to diffuse Biblical knowledge among the vulgar. The praise of this work, if we except the single instance of the Slavonian version of the Scriptures, which, however, was executed by two Greek monks, and not by papists, is purely and exclusively of protestant origin in Europe, during all the ages preceding the reformation.

As Waldo grew more acquainted with the Scriptures, he discovered, that the general practice of nominal Christians was totally abhorrent from the doctrines of the New Testament: and, in particular, that a number of customs, which all the world regarded with reverence, had not only no foundation in the divine oracles, but were even condemned by them. Inflamed with equal zeal and charity, he boldly condemned the reigning vices, and the arrogance of the pope. He did more: as he himself grew in the knowledge of the true faith and love of Christ, he taught his neighbours the principles of practical godliness, and encouraged them to seek salvation by Jesus Christ.

John De Beles Mayons, the archbishop of Lyons, could not but be sensible of the tendency of these proceedings, and being jealous of the honour of the corrupt system, of which he was a distinguished member, he forbade the new reformer to teach any more, on pain of excommunication, and of being proceeded against as an heretic. Waldo replied, that though he was a layman, yet he could not be silent in a matter which concerned the salvation of men. On this reply, the archbishop endeavoured to apprehend him. But the great affection of Waldo's friends, the influence of his relations, who were men of rank, the universal regard paid to his probity and piety, and the conviction which, no doubt, many felt, that the extraordinary circumstances of things justified his assumption of the pastoral character,"

• Usher de Christ. Eccl. success. et statu.

• If Waldo's friends reasoned aright in this, as I am

all these things operated so strongly in his favour, that he lived concealed at Lyons for the space of three years.

Among other scriptural discoveries the evils of the popedom struck the mind of Waldo; and pope Alexander III. having heard of his proceedings, anathematized the reformer and his adherents, and commanded the archbishop to proceed against them with the utmost rigour.

Waldo could no longer remain in Lyons. He escaped; his disciples followed him; and hence a dispersion took place, similar to that which arose in the primitive Church on occasion of the persecution of Stephen. The effects were also similar: the doctrine of Waldo was hence more widely disseminated through Europe. He himself retired into Dauphiny, where his tenets took a deep and lasting root. Some of his people did probably join themselves to the Vaudois of Piedmont, and the new translation of the Bible was, doubtless, a rich accession to the spiritual treasures of that people. Waldo himself, however, seems never to have been among them. Persecuted from place to place, he retired into Picardy. Success still attended his labours; and the doctrines which he preached, appear to have so harmonized with those of the Vaudois, that with reason they and his people were henceforward considered as the same.

To support and encourage the Church of Christ, formed no part of the glory of the greatest and wisest princes of that age. The barbarous conduct of our Henry II. has been already noticed; and Philip Augustus, one of the most prudent and sagacious princes which France ever saw, was no less enslaved by the "god of this world."¹ He took up arms against the Waldenses of Picardy, pulled down three hundred houses of gentlemen who supported their party, destroyed some walled towns, and drove the inhabitants into Flanders. Not content with this, he pursued them thither, and caused many of them to be burned.

From the account of a very authentic French historian,² it appears, that Waldo fled into Germany, and at last settled in Bohemia. There he ended his days in the year 1179, or before that time.³ It is evident,

from good records, that the churches of Dauphiny corresponded with those of Bohemia, and that these last were, on some occasions at least, supplied with pastors from Piedmont. These things show the mutual connection of the Waldensian Churches, and prove the superior antiquity of those of the Vallies, the severity of the persecution, and the important services of Peter Waldo. A very extraordinary personage! resembling in many respects the immediate successors of the Apostles themselves! But his piety, endowments, and labours, have met with no historian capable of doing them justice; and, as in every light he had no reward upon earth, he appears to have been eminently one of those, of whom the world was not worthy;—but he turned many to righteousness, and shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.⁴ The word of God grew and multiplied, in the places where he had planted, and even in still more distant regions. In Alsace and along the Rhine the Gospel was preached with a powerful effusion of the Holy Spirit; persecutions ensued, and thirty-five citizens of Mentz were burned at one fire in the city of Bingen, and at Mentz eighteen. The bishop of Mentz was very active in these persecutions; and the bishop of Strasburg was not inferior to him in vindictive zeal; for, through his means, eighty persons were burned at Strasburg. Every thing relating to the Waldenses resembled the scenes of the primitive Church. Numbers died praising God, and in confident assurance of a blessed resurrection; whence the blood of the martyrs again became the seed of the Church; and in Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hungary, churches were planted, which flourished in the thirteenth century, governed by Bartholomew, a native of Carcassonne, a city not far distant from Toulouse, which might be called in those days the metropolis of the Waldenses, on account of the numbers who there professed evangelical truth.⁵ In Bohemia and in the country of Passau, the churches were reckoned to have contained eighty thousand professors in the former part of the fourteenth century. Almost throughout Europe Waldenses were to be found; and yet they were treated as the offscouring of the earth, and as people against whom all the power and wisdom of the world were united. But "the witnesses continued to prophecy in sackcloth,"⁶ and souls were built up in the faith,

¹ inclined to think they did, arguing from the necessity of the case and the strength of that divine aphorism, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." let not, however, such extraordinary cases give a sanction to many self-created teachers, who disturb rather than strengthen the hands of faithful pastors by their irregular proceedings. See Butler's Analogy, page 232. Oct. Edit.

² Cor. iv. 4.

³ Thuan Hist. sui temp. 457.

⁴ The account, which Mosheim has given us of the Waldenses, is so very different from mine, that it may seem proper, that I should assign the reasons, why I presume to differ from so learned an historian in matters of fact. Iet. I have adduced ample testimonies, and the reader, who will consult Dr. Allix, may see more, to prove, that these persons existed before the time of Peter Waldo, and consequently, that he was not, as Mosheim asserts, the proper parent and founder of the sect. 2d. That his account of their insisting on the necessity

of the poverty and manual labours of their pastors is a mistake, will appear from their own declarations in the next chapter. 3d. So far as Waldo from being the founder of the Churches of the Vallies, that it does not appear, that he ever was in Piedmont at all, 4th. Whereas Mosheim asserts, that he assumed the pastoral function in 1180, it is evident from Thuanus, that he died before that era. On the whole, the information of Mosheim concerning this people, seems very scanty, confused, and erroneous. See Mosheim, Vol. I. p. 615.

⁵ Daniel xii.

⁶ Matthew Paris, in his hist. of Henry III. Ann. 1235.

⁷ Revelat. xi.

the hope, and the charity of the Gospel; and here was the faith and patience of the Saints.

CHAPTER II.

THE REAL CHARACTER OF THE WALDENSES.

BUT we are justly called on, in this place, to vindicate the claim, which this people made to the honourable character of the Church of God. In times of very great decline, whoever is led by the Spirit of God to revive true religion, necessarily exposes himself to the invidious charges of arrogance, uncharitableness, and self-conceit. By condemning all others, he provokes the rest of the world to observe and investigate his faults. These disadvantages, the Waldenses had in common with other reformers: they had also disadvantages peculiarly their own. Power, knowledge, and learning, were almost entirely in the hands of their adversaries: in them very particularly God Almighty chose the weak and foolish things of the world to confound the wise. As they were, for the most part, a plain and illiterate people, they furnished no learned divines, no profound reasoners, nor able historians. The vindication, therefore, of their claims to the character of a true Church must be drawn principally from the holiness of their lives and the patience of their sufferings. There are, however, besides these, certain documents respecting their principles, which will enable the candid and attentive reader to form a just estimate of these men.

Nothing can exceed the calumnies of their adversaries: in this respect they had the honour to bear the cross of the first Christians. Poor men of Lyons and Dogs were the usual terms of derision. In Provence they were called cut-purses: in Italy, because they observed not the appointed festivals, and rested from their ordinary occupations only on Sundays, they were called *In Sabbathas*; that is, regardless of sabbaths. In Germany, they were called *Gazares*, a term expressive of every thing flagitiously wicked. In Flanders they were denominated *Turlupins*, that is, inhabitants with wolves, because they were often obliged to dwell in woods and deserts. And because they denied the consecrated Host to be God, they were accused of Arianism, as if they had denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. Our old historian Hoveden calls them *Arians*.^{*} It was not possible for these poor sufferers to speak a word in defence or explanation of their doctrines, but malice, which discolours every thing, was sure to misrepresent it. If they

maintained the independency of the temporal powers on the ecclesiastical, a doctrine now believed almost universally in Europe, they were called *Manichees*, as if they favoured the notion of two principles. So I find Baronius calls them, observing that they were rather *Manichees* than *Arians*.[†] The old odious name of *gnostic* also was revived, with every other term of ancient or modern opprobrium, which might infix a stigma on the character of the sufferers, and seem to justify the barbarity with which they were treated.

Matthew Paris himself, one of the most valuable of the monkish historians, calls them *Ribalds*, or dissolute men. They were termed, and as numbers believed, not without justice, sorcerers, and even sodomites. It is surprising how the old calumnies, with which the pagans blackened the primitive Christians, were renewed, namely, that they met in the night, were guilty of incest, and the like. Rainerius, their adversary, as mentioned above, was not ashamed to repeat this absurd accusation. To which he adds, that they allowed divorces at pleasure, in order that they might live with their sectarian brethren; that they worshipped their pastors; and that they maintained as a principle that no magistrate ought to condemn any person to death. But it were endless to recite calumnies of this kind: let us see how they cleared themselves by their own writings. An apology was still extant in the time of Perrin, which the Waldenses of Bohemia sent to Ladislaus, king of Hungary and Bohemia, by whom they were grievously persecuted. From this and some other of their writings, their conduct is defended.

In answer to the charge of lewdness, they strongly deny it, and gravely express their abhorrence of the sin. "This vice," say they, "consumes the estates of many, as it is said of the prodigal son, who wasted his substance in riotous living. Balaam made choice of this vice, to provoke the children of Israel to offend their God. Hence Samson lost his sight. Hence Solomon was perverted, and many have perished. The remedies for this sin are fasting, prayer, and the keeping at a distance from temptation. Other vices may be subdued by fighting; in this we conquer by flight." Let men of this refined age, who are enslaved by uncleanness, learn some good rules from the Waldenses, whose simplicity was mixed with true wisdom. The charge of admitting divorces at pleasure they abhor, and quote the Scripture[‡] against the practice: "Let not the wife depart from her husband, nor the husband put away his wife." They published also a book, describing the causes of their separation from the Roman Church. The

* Hoveden, p. 337.

† Bazon. Cent. XII. Ann. 1176.

‡ 1 Cor. vii.

separation was at length made complete, indeed, through the violence of their persecutors; but I have elsewhere observed, that the desire of separating from the Latin Church did not commence with them. This people were injuriously represented also as holding the community of goods, and denying the right of all private property. Their answer to the charge was very satisfactory. "Every one of us hath possessed his own at all times and in all places. In Dauphiny and other parts, when we were dispossessed of our substance, the suits for the recovery of each estate were conducted by the particular proprietors." The Waldenses of Provence do at this present time demand of the pope the restoration of the lands and estates annexed to his domain by confiscation; every particular person making oath of his parcel of goods and lands, which descended to him from time immemorial; for we never have had community of property in the sense objected to us by our adversaries."

Nothing is more common than to slander true Christians with aspersions, which tend to deprive them of all respectability in society, and to represent them as quite unfit for the ordinary purposes of human life. We have just seen a foul attempt of this nature formed against the Waldenses. To the same purport they were charged with denying the lawfulness of oaths in all cases without exception. This point of their history has its difficulties: what they really held on the doctrine of oaths is not very apparent from the account which Usher gives us.¹ Most probably they condemned the multiplicity of oaths, with which the courts of law abounded. That they did not, however, maintain the absolute unlawfulness of oaths is certain, from the exposition of the third commandment in their "spiritual almanack;" in which are these words; "There are some oaths lawful, tending to the honour of God, and the edification of our neighbour, as appears from Heb. vi. 16. Men swear by a greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." Other Scriptures are alleged by them to the same purport. Men who held these things should be acquitted of the charge of universally denying the lawfulness of oaths. But it seems to have been one of the common artifices of the prince of darkness to calumniate the people of God in this manner. He knows, that if religious men be thought wholly unfitted for this world, because of certain absurd or ridiculous customs, the generality of mankind will pay no great regard to their instructions concerning the right way to the next. It is,

therefore, of some consequence, to clear up the character of true Christians in this respect.

Another charge against them was, that they denied baptism to infants. In answer to this, in their spiritual almanack, they say, "neither the time nor the place is appointed for those, who must be baptized. But we do bring our children to be baptized; which they ought to do, to whom they are nearest related; their parents, or those whom God hath inspired with such charity." If this be the case,—and the evidence of their own books appears to be unanswerable,—it seems improper to look on the Waldenses as averse to infant-baptism. Yet, that some of them were regarded as professed enemies to the baptism of infants, is affirmed on respectable authority,² and it possibly might be the case with a few of them. The greater part of them are, however, vindicated in this respect by an authority from which lies no appeal, their own authentic writings. However, having been for some hundreds of years constrained to suffer their children to be baptized by the Romish priests, they were under frequent temptations to defer it, on account of the superstitious inventions annexed to that holy ordinance in those times; and very frequently, on account of the absence of their own pastors, whom they called Barbs, who were travelling abroad for the service of the Churches, they could not have baptism administered to their children by their ministry. The delay occasioned by these things exposed them to the reproach of their adversaries. And though many, who approved of them in all other respects, gave credit to the accusation, I cannot find any satisfactory proof, that they were, in judgment, antipedo-baptists strictly. And it is very probable, that some of the supposed heretics, who have been mentioned above, delayed the baptism of their children on the same account; because similar circumstances would naturally be attended with similar effects. On the whole, a few instances excepted, the existence of antipedo-baptism, seems scarcely to have taken place in the Church of Christ, till a little after the beginning of the reformation, when a sect arose, whom historians commonly call the anabaptists. I lay no great stress on this subject; for the Waldenses might have been a faithful, humble, and spiritual people, as I believe they were, if they had differed from the general body of Christians on this article. But when I find persons to have been taken as enemies to infant-baptism on principle, who were not so, it seemed to be a part of historical veracity to represent things as they really were.

The charge of worshipping their Barbs is

¹ This appears by the legal process, existing in Perrin's time, which shows that Lewis XII. condemned the usurpers of the goods of the Waldenses to a restitution. This happened about the beginning of the sixteenth century.

² Usher De Christ. Eoc. success. et statu.

sufficiently confuted by their exposition of the first commandment in the book of their doctrine. Indeed Albert de Capiteane, their grand enemy in the diocese of Tuzia, violently tortured them, in order to extort from them a confession of this idolatry, but to no purpose.

It was a gross calumny to accuse them as enemies to the penal power of the magistrate, because they complained of the abuse of his power in condemning true Christians to death without a fair examination; when, at the same time, in their own books, they asserted, that "a malefactor ought not to be suffered to live."^a

No less unjust were the charges against them of seditiousness and unfaithfulness to the Supreme Power. For in the book of the causes of their separation from the Church of Rome, they said, that every one ought to be subject to those, who are in authority, to obey and love them, to honour them with double honour, with subjection, allegiance, and promptitude, and the paying of tribute, to whom tribute is due. The charges of sodomy, sorcery, and the like abominations are sufficiently confuted by the authentic writings, holy lives, and patient sufferings of this people.

One charge more against them is, that they compelled their pastors to follow some trade. How satisfactory their answer! "We do not think it necessary that our pastors should work for bread. They might be better qualified to instruct us, if we could maintain them without their own labour; but our poverty has no remedy." So they speak in letters published in 1508.^b

We have hitherto rather rescued their character from infamy, than delineated its real nature. They appear, on the whole, to have been most unjustly aspersed; and the reader will be enabled to form some idea of their piety and probity from the following testimonies of their enemies.

A pontifical inquisitor,^c says, "heretics are known by their manners. In behaviour they are composed and modest, and no pride appears in their apparel." Seyssilius says, it much strengthens the Waldenses, that, their heresy excepted, they generally live a purer life than other Christians. They never swear but by compulsion, and seldom take the name of God in vain; they fulfil their promises with good faith; and, living for the most part in poverty, they profess that they at once preserve the apostolical life and doctrine. Lelenstanius, a dominican, speaking of the Waldenses of Bohemia, says, "I say that in morals and life they are good; true in words, unanimous in brotherly love; but

their faith is incorrigible and vile, as I have shown in my treatise."

These testimonies, for which I am obliged to the researches of archbishop Usher, seem to me to be important. The first, as far as it goes, is favourable; and the second and third, are exceedingly decisive. Causes and effects are necessarily connected. How could the Romanist last quoted suppose, that the faith of men could be bad, whose fruits were so excellent? Could he show any such fruits in the Roman Church in general at that time?

We have now seen the fullest testimony to the holiness of the Waldenses; and we shall see shortly that the doctrines which they held, were no other than those, which, under the divine influence, we have all along observed to be the constant root of virtue in the world.

Rainerius, the cruel persecutor, owns that the Waldenses frequently read the Holy Scriptures, and in their preaching cited the words of Christ and his apostles concerning love, humility, and other virtues; inasmuch that the women, who heard them, were enraptured with the sound. He further says, that they taught men to live, by the words of the Gospel and the Apostles; that they led religious lives; that their manners were seasoned with grace, and their words prudent; that they freely discoursed of divine things, that they might be esteemed good men. He observes, likewise, that they taught their children and families the Epistles and Gospels. Claude, bishop of Turin, wrote a treatise against their doctrines, in which he candidly owns that they themselves were blameless, without reproach among men, and that they observed the divine commands with all their might.

Jacob de Ribera says, that he had seen peasants among them, who could recite the book of Job by heart; and several others, who could perfectly repeat the whole New Testament.

The bishop of Cavaillon once obliged a preaching monk to enter into conference with them, that they might be convinced of their errors, and the effusion of blood be prevented. This happened during a great persecution in 1540, in Merindol and Provence. But the monk returned in confusion, owning that he had never known in his whole life so much of the Scriptures, as he had learned during those few days, in which he had held conferences with the heretics. The bishop, however, sent among them a number of doctors, young men who had lately come from the Sorbonne, which was at that time the very centre of theological subtilty at Paris. One of them openly owned, that he had understood more of the doctrine of salvation from the answers of the little children

^a In a book of the Waldenses, called "The Light of the treasure of Faith."

^b Usher de Christ. Eccl. succ. et statu.

= Id.

in their catechism, than by all the disputations which he had ever heard. This is the testimony of Vesembesius in his oration concerning the Waldenses. The same author informs us farther, that Lewis XII. importuned by the calumnies of informers, sent two respectable persons into Provence, to make inquiries. They reported, that in visiting all their parishes and temples, they found no images or Roman ceremonies, but that they could not discover any marks of the crimes with which they were charged; that the sabbath was strictly observed; that children were baptized according to the rules of the primitive Church, and instructed in the articles of the Christian faith, and the commandments of God. Lewis having heard the report, declared with an oath, "they are better men than myself or my people." One of the confessors of the same king having, by his orders, visited the valley of Frassiniere in Dauphiny, was so struck with the holy lives of the people there, that he declared, in the hearing of several competent witnesses, that he wished he himself were so good a Christian as the worst inhabitant in that valley.

We must add here the testimony of that great historian Thuanus, an enemy indeed to the Waldenses, though a fair and candid one. He is describing one of the vallies inhabited by this people in Dauphiny, which is called the stony valley. "Their clothing," he says, "is of the skins of sheep;—they have no linen.—They inhabit seven villages: their houses are constructed of flint-stone with a flat roof covered with mud, which being spoiled or loosened by rain, they smooth again with a roller. In these they live with their cattle, separated from them, however, by a fence; they have besides two caves set apart for particular purposes, in one of which they conceal their cattle, in the other themselves, when hunted by their enemies. They live on milk and venison, being by constant practice excellent marksmen. Poor as they are, they are content, and live separate from the rest of mankind. One thing is astonishing, that persons externally so savage and rude, should have so much moral cultivation. They can all read and write. They understand French, so far as is needful for the understanding of the Bible and the singing of Psalms. You can scarce find a boy among them, who cannot give you an intelligible account of the faith, which they profess; in this, indeed, they resemble their brethren of the other vallies: they pay tribute with a good conscience, and the obligation of this duty is peculiarly noted in the confession of their faith. If, by reason of the civil wars, they are prevented from doing this, they carefully set apart the

sum, and at the first opportunity pay it to the king's tax-gatherers."

Francis I. the successor of Lewis XII. received, on inquiry, the following information concerning the Waldenses of Merindol, and other neighbouring places; namely, that they were a laborious people, who came from Piedmont to dwell in Provence, about two hundred years ago; that they had much improved the country by their industry; that their manners were most excellent; and that they were honest, liberal, hospitable, and humane; that they were distinct from others in this, that they could not bear the sound of blasphemy, or the naming of the devil, or any oaths, except on solemn occasions; and, that if ever they fell into company where blasphemy or lewdness formed the substance of the discourse, they instantly withdrew themselves.

Such are the testimonies to the character of this people from enemies!

That they are well spoken of by Protestants since the reformation, might be expected; and I need not dwell largely upon evidences drawn from this source. Beza, Bullinger, and Luther, testify the excellence of the Waldenses. The last mentioned reformer deserves the more to be regarded, because he owns that he once was prejudiced against them. He understood by their confessions and writings, that they had been, for ages, singularly serious and expert in the use of the Scriptures.—He rejoiced and gave thanks to God, that he had enabled the reformed and the Waldenses, to see and own each other as brethren.^o

Ceolampadius and Martin Bucer also, in the year 1530, wrote an affectionate letter to the Waldenses of Provence.

After so many testimonies to the character of this people, the evidence of Vignaux, a Waldensian pastor in the vallies of Piedmont, who wrote a treatise on their life and manners, may deserve our attention. "We never mix ourselves," says he, "with the Church of Rome in marriage. Yet Roman Catholic lords and others prefer our people as servants to those of their own religion, and come from far to seek nurses among us for their children."

It is remarkable that Thomas Walden, who wrote against Wickliff, says, that the doctrine of Waldo was conveyed from France into England. It may not, perhaps, be thought improbable, that the English, being masters of Guienne for a long time, should have received some beams of divine truth from the followers of Waldo. By the general confession of the Romanists, indeed, the Protestants and the Waldenses were looked on as holding the same principles.

The churches of Piedmont, however, on

^o Thuan. Hist. B. 27. p. 16.

^o Vesembesius.

account of their superior antiquity, were regarded as guides of the rest; inasmuch, that when two pastors, who had been sent by them into Bohemia, acted with perfidy, and occasioned a grievous persecution, still the Bohemians ceased not to desire pastors from Piedmont; only they requested, that none but persons of tried characters might be sent to them for the future.

I can only give the general outlines: if the finer and more numerous lines of this scene could be circumstantially drawn, a spectacle more glorious could scarcely be exhibited to the reader. From the borders of Spain, throughout the south of France for the most part, among and below the Alps, along the Rhine, on both sides of its course, and even to Bohemia, thousands of godly souls were seen patiently to bear persecution for the sake of Christ, against whom malice could say no evil, but what admits the most satisfactory refutation:—men distinguished for every virtue, and only hated because of godliness itself. Persecutors with a sigh owned, that, because of their virtue, they were the most dangerous enemies of the Church. But of what Church? Of that, which in the thirteenth century and long before had evidenced itself to be Antichristian. Here were not an individual or two, like Bernard, but very many real Christians, who held the real doctrines of Scripture, and carefully abstained from all the idolatry of the times. How obdurate is the heart of man by nature! men could see and own the superior excellence of these persons, and yet could barbarously persecute them! what a blessed light is that of Scripture! By that the Waldenses saw the road to heaven, of which the wisest of their contemporaries were ignorant, who, though called Christians, made no use of the oracles of God! How marvellous are the ways of God! how faithful his promise in supporting and maintaining a Church, even in the darkest times!—but her livery is often sackcloth, and her external bread is that of affliction, while she sojourns on earth. But let no factious partizan encourage himself in sedition by looking at the Waldenses. We have seen how obedient they were to established governments; and that separation from a Church, so corrupt as that of Rome, was with them only matter of necessity. The best and wisest in all ages have acted in the same manner, and have dreaded the evils of schism more than those of a defect in discipline. We shall now see what the Waldenses were in point of doctrine and discipline. For their virtues had an evangelical principle, and it is only to be regretted that the accounts are very scanty on a subject worthy the attention of all, who desire to understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE OF THE WALDENSES.

THE leading principle of this Church, which God raised up in the dark ages to bear witness to his Gospel, is that, in which all the Protestant Churches agreed, namely, “that we ought to believe that the Holy Scriptures alone contain all things necessary to our salvation, and that nothing ought to be received as an article of faith but what God hath revealed to us.” Wherever this principle is not only assented to in form, but also received with the heart, it expels superstition and idolatry. The worship of one God, through the one Mediator, and by the influence of one Holy Spirit, is practised sincerely. For the dreams of purgatory, the intercession of Saints, the adoration of images, dependence on relics and austerities, cannot stand before the doctrine of Scripture. Salvation by grace, through faith in Christ alone, as it is the peculiar truth and glory of the Scriptures, so it is the boast and joy of the Christian, who knows himself to be that guilty polluted creature, which the same Scriptures describe. How abominable to such an one must appear the doctrine of indulgences, and of commutation for offences, and the whole structure of the papal domination! The true love of God and of our neighbour, even the true holiness, which is the great end and aim of Christ’s redemption, must be subverted by these human inventions. The Waldenses were faithful to the great fundamental principle of protestantism. Enough appears on record to prove, that they were formed by the grace of God, to shew forth his praise in the world; and great as the resemblance appears between them and the reformed, if we had as many writings of the former, as we have of the latter, the resemblance in all probability would appear still more striking.

“They” affirm, that there is only one Mediator, and therefore that we must not invoke the Saints.

“That there is no purgatory; but that all those, who are justified by Christ, go into life eternal.”

They receive two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. They affirm, that all masses are damnable, especially those, which are repeated for the dead, and that therefore they ought to be abolished; to which they add the rejection of numberless ceremonies. They deny the supremacy of the pope, especially the power, which he

p. Vignaux in his *memoirs of the Waldenses*. See this principle expressed in a similar manner in the sixth Article of the Church of England.

† Vignaux.

bath usurped over the civil government; and they admit no other degrees, except those of bishops, priests, and deacons. They condemn the popedom as the true Babylon, allow the marriage of the clergy, and define the true Church to be those, who hear and understand the word of God."

Vignaux mentions old manuscripts extant among the Waldenses, containing catechisms and sermons, which demonstrate with what superior light they were favoured, in a time of immense darkness. A number of their old treatises evince, that for some hundreds of years the principles of the Gospel, which alone can produce such holiness of life as the Waldenses exhibited in their conduct, were professed, understood, and embraced by this chosen people, while Antichrist was in the very height of his power.

They appear to have had all the essentials of Church-discipline among them; and their circumstances of distress, of poverty, and of persecution, however disagreeable to flesh and blood, favoured that spirit of submission and subordination, which ever promotes a salutary exercise of discipline; through the want of which, among ourselves, Churchmen are too commonly treated as insignificant. A state of refinement, of wealth, of luxury, and of political speculation, was unknown to the Waldenses: how subversive such a state is apt to be of the most wholesome ecclesiastical authority, the experience of our own age demonstrates.

In a book concerning their pastors we have this account of their vocation.

"All, who are to be ordained as pastors among us, while they are yet at home, entreat us to receive them into the ministry, and desire that we would pray to God, that they may be rendered capable of so great a charge. They are to learn by heart all the chapters of St. Matthew and St. John, all the canonical epistles, and a good part of the writings of Solomon, David, and the prophets. Afterwards, having exhibited proper testimonials of their learning and conversation, they are admitted as pastors by the imposition of hands. The junior pastors must do nothing without the license of their seniors; nor are the seniors to undertake anything without the approbation of their colleagues, that every thing may be done among us in order. We pastors meet together once every year, to settle our affairs, in a general synod. Those, whom we teach, afford us food and raiment with good will, and without compulsion. The money given us by the people is carried to the said general synod, is there received by the elders, and is applied partly to the supply of travellers, and partly to the relief of the indigent. If a pastor among us shall fall into a gross sin, he is ejected from the community, and debarred from the function of preaching."

Such was the manner of choosing their Barbs, and such was the plan of Church-government.

To transcribe their confessions of faith would be tedious; let it suffice to mention the most interesting points. They unquestionably received the Apostle's creed, and that commonly ascribed to Athanasius. They acknowledged the same canon of Scripture, which the Church of England does in her sixth Article; and, what is very remarkable, they give the same account of the Apocryphal books, accompanied with the same remark of Jerom, which the reader will find in the same sixth Article. They say, "these books teach us, that there is one God Almighty, wise and good, who in his goodness made all things. He created Adam after his own image. But through the malice of the devil and the disobedience of Adam, sin entered into the world, and we became sinners in and by Adam. That Christ is our life and truth, and peace, and righteousness, our shepherd and advocate, our sacrifice and priest, who died for the salvation of all who should believe, and also rose again for our justification."

The confession of the Bohemian Waldenses, published in the former part of the sixteenth century, is very explicit on these articles. They say,—that men ought to acknowledge themselves born in sin, and to be burdened with the weight of sin,—that they ought to acknowledge, that for this depravity, and for the sins springing up from this root of bitterness, utter perdition deservedly hangs over their heads, and that all should own, that they can no way justify themselves by any works or endeavours, nor have any thing to trust to, but Christ alone.—They hold, that by faith in Christ, men are, through mercy, freely justified, and attain salvation by Christ, without human help or merit. They hold, that all confidence is to be fixed in him alone, and all our care to be cast upon him; and, that for his sake only God is pacified, and adopts us to be his children. They teach also, that no man can have this faith by his own power, will, or pleasure; that it is the gift of God, who, where it pleaseth him, worketh it in man by his Spirit. They teach also the doctrine of good works as fruits and evidences of a lively faith, much in the same manner as the Church of England does in her twelfth Article, and more largely in her homilies.

The Waldenses in general express their firm belief, that there is no other Mediator than Jesus Christ: they speak with great respect of the Virgin Mary as holy, humble, and full of grace; at the same time that they totally discountenance that senseless and extravagant admiration, in which she had been

held for ages. They asserted, that all, who have been and shall be saved, have been elected of God before the foundation of the world; and that whosoever upholds free-will, absolutely denies predestination and the grace of God.¹ I use their own terms free-will, not that I think it strictly proper. But what they meant by an upholder of free-will, is not hard to be understood, namely, one, who maintains that there are resources in the nature of man sufficient to enable him to live to God as he ought, without any need of the renewal of his nature by divine grace.

"We honour," say they, "the secular powers with subjection, obedience, promptitude, and payment of tribute." On this subject they are repeatedly explicit, and mention the example of our Lord, "who refused not to pay tribute, not taking upon himself any jurisdiction of temporal power."

They give a practical view of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, perfectly agreeable to the faith of the orthodox in all ages. Let it suffice to mention what they say of the Holy Ghost. "We believe, that he is our Comforter, proceeding from the Father and from the Son; by whose INSPIRATION we pray, being ~~reminded~~ by him who ~~formeth~~ all good works within us; and by him we have knowledge of all truth." Of the nature and use of the Sacraments, they speak the common language of the Protestant Churches. The difference, indeed, between real good men in all ages, even in point of sentiment, on fundamental questions, is much smaller than what many believe. Trifling differences have been exceedingly magnified, partly through ignorance and partly through uncharitableness. Through the course of this history the uniformity of faith, of inward experience, and of external practice, has appeared in the different ages of the Church. For it is the SAME GOD WHO WORKETH ALL IN his real Saints.

It is remarkable that an ancient confession of faith, copied out of certain manuscripts bearing date 1120, that is forty years before Peter Waldo, contains the same articles in substance, and in many particulars in the same words, as those, an abridgement of which has been given already, and which were approved of in the sixteenth century. The conclusion from this fact is, that though Waldo was a most considerable benefactor to the Waldensian Churches by his translation of the Scriptures, his other writings, his preaching, and his sufferings, he was not properly their founder. Their plan of doctrine and Church-establishment, particularly in Piedmont, was of prior date, nor can any other account of the existence and light of a Church so pure and sound in ages so remarkably corrupt be given than this, that the la-

bours of Claudius of Turin in the ninth century had, under God, produced these effects. Men, who spend and are spent for the glory of God, and for the profit of souls, have no conception of the importance of their efforts. While the schemes and toils of an ambitious conqueror or an intriguing politician, which, at the time, fill the world with admiration, do often vanish like smoke, the humble and patient labours of a minister of Christ, though, during his own life, derided and despised by the great ones of the earth, remain in durable effects to succeeding generations, and emancipate thousands from the dominion of sin and Satan. God will work, AND WHO SHALL LET IT? In one article, indeed, these professors of pure religion seem to have carried their zeal beyond the bounds of Christian discretion. "We have," say they, "always accounted, as unspeakable abominations before God, all those inventions of men, namely, the feasts and the vigils of Saints." To these they add the idolatrous corruptions of the popedom. They either did not know or did not consider, that the anniversaries of the martyrdoms of primitive Saints were of very high antiquity, and were observed in the purest times, even in the second century. As they were at that time observed, they seem not to have had any superstitious alloy, and might be productive of the best consequences, much less do they deserve the title of "unspeakable abominations." But the adoration and canonization of Saints, with other practices, which deserve the name of abominations, being incorporated with these festivals, in the twelfth and some preceding centuries, denotably account for the zealous and unassailable indignation of these reformers.

The ancient catechism, for the instruction of their youth, contains the same vital truths in substance, which form the catechisms of Protestant Churches. I shall mention two or three particulars, which are most strikingly peculiar.

Q. Wherein consists your salvation?

Ans. In three substantial virtues, which do necessarily belong to salvation.

Q. How can you prove that?

Ans. The Apostle writes, 1 Cor. xiii. now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three.

Q. What is faith?

Ans. According to the Apostle, Heb. xi. 1. it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Q. How many sorts of faith are there?

Ans. There are two sorts, a living and a dead faith.

Q. What is a living faith?

Ans. It is that which works by love.

Q. What is a dead faith?

Ans. According to St. James, that faith, which is without works, is dead. Again,

¹ Morland, p. 40.

faith is nothing without works. Or, a dead faith is to believe that there is a God, and to believe those things which relate to God, and not to believe in him.

This last clause seems happily descriptive of the point. To believe in Christ is by himself in John vi. illustrated by coming to him or trusting in him, being an exercise of heart toward Christ, which always works by love. Whereas a bare unoperative assent to certain doctrinal truths implies no reception of Christ in the heart, though it be all that thousands look on as necessary to constitute a genuine believer. That the composers of this catechism had in view this important distinction between speculatively believing a person to exist, and cordially believing in that person, appears from another question and answer.

“Q. Dost thou believe in the Holy Catholic Church?”

A. No; for it is a creature; but I believe that there is one.”

They then proceed to shew that the real Church consists “of the elect of God from the beginning to the end of the world, by the grace of God, through the merit of Christ, gathered together by the Holy Spirit, and fore-ordained to eternal life.”

The Waldensian Churches had also an exposition of the Apostle's Creed, the ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments. So remarkably has the Spirit of God, in all ages, led the real Church in a similar manner, to provide for the instruction of her children, by comments on the most necessary fundamentals! The Protestant Churches, in their original construction, all followed the same plan. An excess of ceremonies, and a burdensome round of superstitions, filled all the dominions of the papacy, while here and there an inventive genius, like Peter Abelard, endeavoured to swell the minds of men by philosophical refinements. In the mean time the genuine Christians were feeding on the bread of life, which was supplied by the Divine Word, and was communicated through the medium of catechetical and expository tracts, adapted to the plainest understandings. At this day true Christians are employed in the same manner; and a diligent observer may distinguish them from those of the superstitious or the self-sufficient cast. In our times, indeed, there does appear one remarkable difference of circumstances from the state of religion in the thirteenth century, namely, that the self-sufficient, sceptical spirit predominates extremely above the superstitions.

I have examined the Waldensian expositions, which, together with the Scripture-proofs annexed to them, must at that day have formed a very salutary body of instruction. But the numerous modern treatises, which are extant on the same subjects, ren-

der it superfluous for me to give them in detail. A few of the most striking thoughts shall be mentioned:

It deserves to be noticed, that in their exposition of the Apostles' Creed, Waldensian reformers give us the well known text in 1 John v. 7. as a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. They were, it seems, perfectly satisfied of its authenticity.

“The Son of God, by the commandment of God the Father, and by his own free-will, was lifted up upon the altar of the cross, and was crucified, and hath redeemed mankind with his own blood; which work being accomplished, he arose from the dead the third day, having diffused through the world a light everlasting, like a new sun; that is, the glory of the resurrection, and of an heavenly inheritance, which the Son of God hath promised to give to all those who serve him in faith.”

Hear, in a few instances, how in common with all evangelical expositors they understand the spiritual meaning of the commandments. For “the first degree to salvation is the knowledge of sin; and therefore acknowledging our fault, we approach with confidence to the throne of grace, and confess our sins.”

“All that love the creature more than the Creator, observe not the first commandment,—If a man shall say, I cannot tell, whether I have a greater love to God, or to that, which he forbids me to love, let him know that what a man loves least, in a case of necessity, is that which he is most willing to lose, and that which he loves the most, he preserves. Men cast their merchandize into the sea, to preserve their lives; which shows that they love life more than property. By such rules thou mayst try, whether thou lovest God more than all persons and things besides, or, whether thou art an idolater.”

On the second commandment, they are soundly argumentative and judiciously exact, because of the abominations, with which they were surrounded, and with which all Europe was infected, except themselves.

“In the third commandment we are forbidden to swear falsely, vainly, or by custom. An oath acknowledgeth that God knows the truth, and it confirmeth a thing that is doubtful: it is an act of divine service, and therefore they, who swear by the elements, do sin.”

“Those who will observe the sabbath of Christians, that is, who will sanctify the day of the Lord, must be careful of four things. 1st. to cease from earthly and worldly labours; 2d. to abstain from sin; 3d. not to be slothful in regard of good works; and 4th. to do those things, which are for the good of the soul.” They support their assertion by the case of the sabbath-breaker in the book of Numbers, who was stoned to death.

In the rest of the commandments, they extend the meaning to the desires of the heart, and vindicate their interpretation by the well-known passages in our Lord's sermon on the Mount. How could serious persons, who thus see the spirituality of the law, ever find rest to their consciences, but in the blood of Christ? and how common is it for self-righteous persons on the other hand to curtail the demands of the law, and make light of sin; that they may justify themselves!

On the Lord's Prayer, in a very sensible introduction, they observe, that "God, who seeth the secrets of our hearts, is more moved by a deep groan or sigh, with complaints and tears that come from the heart, than by a thousand words." In opposition to the formal rounds of repetition at that time so fashionable, they say, "there is no man, who can keep his mind attentive to prayer a whole day or a whole night together, except God give the special assistance of his grace. God hath therefore appointed to his servants other exercises, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, which are to be performed for the good of themselves or of their neighbours, with their hearts lifted up to God." "To pray much is to be fervent in prayer." "No prayer can be pleasing to God, which refers not some way or other to the Lord's Prayer. Every Christian ought to apply himself to understand and learn it."

There is among the records of this people a very ancient confession of sin, which was commonly used, and which shows that they taught every person to apply to himself that hideous picture of human depravity, which St. Paul delineates, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." If no more could be said for this people, than that they hated the gross abominations of popery, and condemned the vices of the generality of mankind, they might have been ostentatious Pharisees, or self-sufficient Socinians. But though, no doubt, there were unsound professors among them as among all other bodies of Christians, yet, in their community, there were a number of real Christians, who knew how to direct the edge of their severity against the "sins that dwelled in them," and who, being truly humbled under a piercing sight of native depravity, betook themselves wholly to the grace of God in Christ for salvation. Hear how they speak. "Excuse myself I cannot; for thou, O Lord, hast showed me both what is good and evil. I have understood thy power; I have not been ignorant of thy wisdom; I have known thy justice; and have tasted of thy goodness. Yet all the evil, which I do, proceeds from my own depravity.—I have committed many evils from the beginning of my life;—covetousness is rooted in my heart; I love avarice, I seek after applause, and

bear little love to those, who have obliged me by their kindness. If thou do not pardon me, my soul must go down to perdition. Anger likewise reigns in my heart, and envy gnaws me; for I am naturally without charity.—I am slow to do good, but industrious to do evil. I have blinded myself, and have had many evil thoughts against thee.—I have cast mine eyes on vain delights, and have seldom lifted them up to thy face. I have lent an ear to empty sounds, and to many evil speakings; but to hear and understand thy laws hath been grievous and irksome to me. I have taken more pleasure in the noisome sink of sin, than in divine sweetness; I have even worshipped sin;—I have endeavoured to conceal my own guilt, and to lay it upon another.—My mind and body are wounded;—my heart hath been delighted with evil things; with many foolish and unprofitable objects.—I have turned aside into by-paths, and, by my levity, have given an ill example to others. I have slandered my neighbour,—and have loved him only, because of my temporal interest."

There is not, in any age, a truly humble and serious Christian, who will not acknowledge himself guilty in all these respects before God, even though his conduct has, comparatively speaking, been blameless before men. It is the want of self-knowledge, which keeps men ignorant of their ill desert before God; and, in truth, nothing is so much unknown to men in general as the propensity of their own hearts. This knowledge, however, was found among the Waldenses; and hence they were an humble people, prepared to receive the Gospel of Christ from the heart, to walk in his steps, to carry his cross, and to fear sin above all other evils.

Some ancient inquisitorial memoirs describing the manners and customs of this people, speak to this effect: "kneeling on their knees, they continue in prayers with silence, so long as a man may say thirty or forty Pater nosters. This they do daily with great reverence, when they have no strangers with them, both before dinner and after; likewise before supper and after, and when they retire to rest, and in the morning. Before they go to meat, the elder among them says, God who blessed the five barley loaves and two fishes before his disciples in the wilderness, bless this table and that which is set upon it, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And after meat, he says, the God which has given us corporal food, grant us his spiritual life, and may God be with us, and we always with him. After their meals, they teach and exhort one another."

Reinerius, their adversary, declares, "that a certain heretical Waldensian, with a view of turning a person from the Catholic faith,

swam over a river in the night and in the winter, to come to him and teach him.

Hear what a character an ancient inquisitor gives of this people: "Heretics are known by their manners and words; for they are orderly and modest in their manners and behaviour. They avoid all appearance of pride in their dress, they neither wear rich clothes, nor are they too mean and ragged in their attire. They avoid commerce, that they may be free from falsehood and deceit: they live by manual industry, as day-labourers or mechanics; and their preachers are weavers and tailors. They seek not to amass wealth, but are content with the necessities of life. They are chaste, temperate, and sober; they abstain from anger. They hypocritically go to the Church, confess, communicate, and hear sermons, to catch the preacher in his words. Their women are modest, avoid slander, foolish jesting, and levity of words, especially falsehood and oaths."

Their directions to pastors in visiting the sick are full of evangelical simplicity. The afflicted person is exhorted to look to Christ as the great pattern of patient sufferers, "who is the true Son of God, and yet hath been more afflicted than we all, and more tormented than any other.—Let the sick man consider with himself, that he is grievously afflicted as his Saviour was, when he suffered for us; for which the man ought to yield thanks to God, because it hath pleased him to give this good Saviour to death for us, and at the same time to beg mercy at his hands in the name of Jesus. And we Christians ought to have a perfect confidence and assurance, that our Father will forgive us for his goodness sake.—Let the sick person commit himself wholly to the Lord.—Let him do to his neighbour, as he would have his neighbour do to him, making such arrangements among his relations, that he may leave them in peace, and that there may be no suits or contentions after his death.—Let him hope for salvation in Jesus Christ, and not in any other, or by any other thing, acknowledging himself a miserable sinner, that he may ask mercy of God, finding himself in such a manner culpable, that of himself he deserveth eternal death. If the pastor find the sick person alarmed and terrified with the sense of the divine displeasure against sinners, let him remind the distressed soul of those comfortable promises which our Saviour hath made to all those, who come to him, and who, from the bottom of their heart, call upon him; and how God the Father hath promised forgiveness, whensoever we shall ask it in the name of his Son. These are the things, in which the true preacher of the Word ought faithfully to

employ himself, that he may conduct the party visited to his Saviour.

And whereas, in former times, it hath been the custom to cause the disconsolate widow to spend much money on singers and ringers, and on persons who eat and drink, while she weeps and fasts, wronging her fatherless children; it is our duty, from motives of compassion, to the end that one loss be not added to another, to aid them with our counsel and our goods, according to the ability which God hath bestowed on us, taking care that the children be well instructed, that they may labour to maintain themselves, as God hath ordained, and live like Christians."

The directions, which they gave to new converts, were, to study the epistolary instructions of St. Paul, that they might know how to walk in such a manner as not to give occasion of falling to their neighbours, and, that they might not make the house of the Lord a den of thieves.

They were zealous in directing the education of children. "Despair not," say they, "of thy child, when he is unwilling to receive correction, or, if he prove not speedily good; for the labourer gathereth not the fruits of the earth, as soon as the seed is sown, but he waits till the due season. A man ought to have a careful eye over his daughters. Keep them within, and see they wander not. For Dinah the daughter of Jacob was corrupted by being seen of strangers."

In ecclesiastical correction, they were directed by our Lord's rule, in first reproving a brother in private; secondly, in the presence of two or three brethren; and, last of all, and not till other methods failed, in proceeding to excommunication. Private correction, they observe, is sufficient for faults not made known to many; but, in the case of open sins, they followed the apostolical rule." Them, that sin, rebuke before all, that others may fear.—"Marriages are to be made according to the degrees of kindred permitted by God.—The pope's dispensations are of no value, nor deserve the least regard.—The band of holy matrimony must not be made without the consent of the parents of both parties; for children belong to their parents."

Against the disorders of taverns, and the mischiefs of dancing they are exceedingly severe. Remark one sentence; "They, who deck and adorn their daughters, are like those, who put dry wood to the fire, to the end that it may burn the better. A tavern is the fountain of sin, and the school of Satan." For conversing with those, that are without, they give rules, full of Christian simplicity; and they direct their people also in Christian morals after a style and manner

much superior to the spirit and taste of the thirteenth century. Their rules of ecclesiastical correction and excommunication were drawn from the New Testament. Private faults were to be censured privately, public faults before the congregation; and, in case of incorrigibleness, they proceeded to excommunication.²

It may be proper to observe here, that Sir Samuel Morland, in his history of the evangelical Churches of the vallies of Piedmont, bears the strongest testimony to the truth of Perrin's narrative. He gives us the attestation of Tronchin, the chief minister of Geveva, which attestation, he tells us, is, together with other original papers, in the public library of the University of Cambridge. The substance of the attestation itself is, that Tronchin declares, that Perrin coming to Geveva to print his history, communicated to him his work, and divers original manuscripts, from which he (Perrin) had extracted the ancient doctrine and discipline of the Waldenses, which manuscripts Tronchin then saw and perused. Tronchin's testimony is dated in 1656. We have here the united testimony of Perrin, Tronchin, and Morland, to the authenticity of the history before us. And it appears that the same Tronchin, at the distance of thirty-eight years, corresponded both with Perrin and Morland. There is also a book concerning Antichrist in an old manuscript, which contains many sermons of the pastors; it is dated 1120, and therefore was written before the time of Waldo. The existence, therefore, of these Churches is still farther proved to have taken place before the days of that reformer. The treatise concerning Antichrist was preserved by the Waldenses of the Alps; and a brief summary of it is as follows. "He is called Antichrist, because, being covered and adorned under the colour of Christ and his Church, he opposes the salvation purchased by Christ, of which the faithful are partakers by faith, hope, and charity. He contradicts the truth by the wisdom of the world, and by counterfeit holiness.—To make up a complete system of religious hypocrisy, all these things must concur,—there must be worldly-wise men, there must be religious orders, pharisees, ministers, doctors, the secular power, and lovers of this world. Antichrist, indeed, was conceived in the Apostles' times, but he was in his infancy, unformed and imperfect. He was therefore the more easily known and ejected, being rude, raw, and wanting utterance.—He had then no skill in making decretals, he wanted hypocritical ministers and the show of religious orders. He had none of those riches, by which he might allure ministers to his service, and multiply his adherents: he wanted also the secular

power, and could not compel men to serve him. But he grew to a full age, when the lovers of the world, both in Church and state, did multiply and get all the power into their hands:—Christ had never any enemy like to this, so able to pervert the way of truth into falsehood, inasmuch that the Church with her true children is trodden under foot.—He robs Christ of his merits, of justification, regeneration, sanctification, and spiritual nourishment, and ascribes the same to his own authority, to a form of words, to his own works, to saints, and to the fire of purgatory.—Yet he has some decent qualities, which throw a veil over his enormities; such as an external profession of Christianity, tradition, and catalogues of episcopal succession, lying wonders, external sanctity, and certain sayings of Christ himself, the administration of the sacraments, verbal preaching against vices, and the virtuous lives of some, who really live to God in Babylon, whom, however, Antichrist, so far as in him lies, prevents from placing all their hope in Christ alone.—These things are a cloak, with which Antichrist hides his wickedness, that he may not be rejected as a pagan. Knowing these things, we depart from Antichrist, according to express Scriptural directions.—We unite ourselves to the truth of Christ and his spouse, how small soever she appear. We describe the causes of our separation from Antichrist, that if the Lord be pleased to impart the knowledge of the same truth to others, those, who receive it, together with us may love it. But, if they be not sufficiently enlightened, they may receive help by our ministry, and be washed by the Spirit. If any one have received more abundantly than we ourselves, we desire the more humbly to be taught, and to amend our defects.—A various and endless idolatry marks the genius of Antichrist, and he teaches men by that to seek for grace, which is essentially in God alone, exists meritously in Christ, and is communicated by

² Hence it appears, that, in 1120, there was a body of the Waldenses, who had perfectly separated from the Roman Church. Yet, it is evident from Bernard's account, that those of whom he had some knowledge, were not separatists. This may be one instance of their differences among themselves, of which Everinus speaks. And it is very conceivable, that men equally sincere, might not be for a time, unanimous in this point. The dread of schism on the one hand, and of idolatrous contagion on the other, would each afford no contemptible argument on both sides of the question.—The Albigenses, however, a branch of the Waldenses, in the year 1200 were so exceedingly numerous, that they then formed a distinct Church, and were openly separate from the whole Romish system. In truth, though it seems to have been the fault of some protestant historians to give too early a date to the reign of Antichrist, and, on that account, to condemn unjustly several Romish pastors, whom I have attempted to vindicate, yet the man of sin doubtless did appear, at length, in all that enormity, which the most vehement of the protestant writers have described. Therefore it became absolutely necessary for real Christians to depart from Babylon. The several bodies of the Waldenses did so, though, I think, successively and gradually.—They are properly the first of the Protestant Churches.

faith alone through the Holy Spirit." They then proceed to confute distinctly the various abominations of popery, on which point it is, at this day, unnecessary to enlarge. Suffice it to say, that to see and argue as they did in that dark age, required a light and strength of judgment, of which we can now scarcely form an idea. It is more to my purpose to mention some testimonies of the offices of Christ, which are interwoven in their arguments. "He is our advocate: he forgives sins. He presents himself in some measure to us, before we bestir ourselves. He knocks, that we should open to him; and, to obstruct all occasions of idolatry, he sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven, and desires, that every faithful soul should have recourse to him alone. For all the care of the faithful should be directed toward Christ, imitating him that is above. He is the gate: whosoever entereth by him shall be saved. He alone hath the prerogative, to obtain whatever he requests in behalf of mankind, whom he hath reconciled by his death.—To what purpose should we address ourselves to any other Saint as Mediator, seeing he himself is far more charitable and far more ready to succour us than any of them?"

There is also a short treatise on tribulation, a subject highly needful to be studied by all Christians,—by those more particularly, who, like the Waldenses, lived in the flames of persecution.

The noble lesson, written in the year 1100, has already, in part, been given to the reader, and it closes the account of Waldensian monuments, collected by Perry of Lyons.

Some of the thoughts, which I have transcribed from this author, on account of their extreme simplicity, may appear almost childish to persons, whose taste has been formed purely by modern models and maxims; and it must be confessed, that we discover no persons of superior capacity or uncommon genius among this people. Their means of knowledge were ordinary, their situation confined, and their circumstances perhaps universally poor. Even so FATHER, FOR SO IT SEEMED GOOD IN THY MIGHT.* The excellency of the power was therefore of God and not of man. How happened it, that they should possess so sound a portion of evangelical truth, so ably and judiciously confute established errors, so boldly maintain the truth as it is in Jesus, so patiently suffer for it, live so singularly distinct from the world, and so nobly superior to all around them; while princes, dignitaries, universities, and all, that was looked on as great, splendid, and wise among men, wandered in miserable darkness? It was of the Lord, who is wonderful in council and excellent in work; and

his preservation of a godly seed in the earth, in such circumstances, is a pledge that he never will forsake his Church, and that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it.

We have seen the most satisfactory proofs of the genuine apostolical doctrine, connected with holy practice by the influence of the Holy Spirit, as subsisting among this people. At the Reformation, some fundamental doctrines, particularly that of original sin, and of justification by faith in Christ, were indeed more distinctly and explicitly unfolded. But every candid and intelligent reader has seen that these, with all other fundamental truths, were understood and confessed by the Waldenses. The principal defect of these records is, that invectives against Anti-christ and its abominations make up too large a proportion of their catechetical instructions; and the general vital truths of the Gospel are not so much enlarged on as the reader, who seeks edification, would wish. How far this defect might be less obvious, or even disappear, could we see the many sermons of their pastors, I know not. But these churches were in perpetual trouble and danger; and their distressed circumstances form, in some measure, an apology for the imperfection of their writings.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE WALDENSES.

THIS is the only subject relating to the Waldenses, which has not passed under our review. Their external history is, indeed, little else than a series of persecution. And I regret, that while we have some large and distinct details of the cruelties of their persecutors, we have very scanty accounts of the spirit, with which they suffered; and still less of the internal exercises of holiness, which are known only to the people of God. But this is not the first occasion, which we have had to lament, concerning the manner in which Church-history has been transmitted to us.

In 1162, two years after Waldo had begun to preach the Gospel in Lyons, Lewis VII. of France, and Henry II. of England, on foot, holding the bridle of the horse of Pope Alexander III. walking one on one side of him, the other on the other, conducted him to his habitation; exhibiting, says Baronius¹, a spectacle most grateful to God, to angels, and to men! For the princes of the earth, as well as the meanest persons, were now enalased to the popedom, and were easily led to persecute the children of God with the

* Luke x. 21.

¹ Baronius Annals, Cent. XII.

most savage barbarity. We are astonished in reading the details of persecution. That, which raged against the Waldenses in the former part of the thirteenth century, was indeed an assemblage of every thing cruel, perfidious, indecent, and detestable. But we are not to imagine, that contemporaries beheld such scenes with the same horror with which we do: the "god of this world," with consummate dexterity, infatuates his slaves, by a successive variety of wickedness, adapted to circumstances. The scenes of villainy, meanness, indecency, hypocrisy, and barbarity, which, for several years, have been carrying on in France, under the mask of philosophy, liberty, and rationality, have found, in our own country, many defenders, or at least apologists. The reason is, that irreligious scepticism or atheistic profaneness is the darling of these times, as superstition was that of the thirteenth century. And, if men will not learn the all-important lesson, namely, to obey the divine oracles, there seems no end of the deceits by which the prince of darkness will impose on mankind.

In 1176 some of the Waldenses, called heretics, being examined by the bishops were convicted of heresy. They were said to receive only the New Testament, and to reject the Old, except in the testimonies quoted by our Lord and the Apostles.^b This charge is confuted by the whole tenour of their authentic writings, in which they quote the Old Testament authority as divine, without reserve or hesitation. Being interrogated concerning their faith, we are told, that they said, "we are not bound to answer." Other accusations against them were as follows, namely, that they asserted the truth of the Manichean doctrine of two independent principles, that they denied the utility of infant-baptism, and that the Lord's body^c was made by the consecration of an unworthy priest, that unfaithful ministers had any right to the exercise of ecclesiastical power, or to titles and first-fruits, or that the faithful ought to attend their pastoral services, or that auricular confession was necessary, or that oaths were in any case lawful. The reader, who has attentively considered the foregoing accounts of the Waldenses, will know how to separate the falsehood from the truth contained in these charges. "All these things," says Baronius, "the wretched men asserted, that they learned from the Gospels and Epistles, and that they would receive nothing, except what they found expressly contained there, thus rejecting the interpretation of the doctors, though they themselves were perfectly illiterate. They were confuted," he adds, "at a conference before the bishop of Albi, from the New Testament, which alone

they admitted; and, they professed the Catholic faith, but would not swear, and were therefore condemned."

From this account, however imperfect, and in several instances, palpably injurious, some farther light may be collected of the state of the Waldenses at that time.

In 1178, the same Lewis and Henry, who had sixteen years before, in so unkingly a manner, given their "power and strength to the beast,"^c hearing that the Albigenses grew in numbers, determined to attack them by the sword, but afterwards thought it more prudent to employ preachers.^d They sent to them several bishops and ecclesiastics; and they employed Raymond of Toulouse and other noblemen to expel the refractory. The commissioners arriving at Toulouse exacted, by an oath, of the Catholics there, that they should give information of the heretics whom they knew. Great numbers were hence discovered. Among these was a rich old man called Peter Moranus, who had pretended to be John the Evangelist.^e This person, denying the bread to be the body of Christ, was condemned: his goods were confiscated: his castles, the conventicles of heretics, were thrown down. Peter abjured his heresy, and was brought naked and barefoot into the Church before all the people; the bishop of Toulouse and a certain abbot beating him on each side from the entrance of the building to the steps of the altar, where the cardinal legate celebrated mass. There, being reconciled to the Church, he again abjured his heresy, anathematized heretics, and submitted to another penance, which was this, namely, after forty days to leave his country, to serve the poor at Jerusalem three years; and, during the forty days, each Sunday to go round the Churches of Toulouse naked and barefoot, disciplined by rods, and to make various restitutions. It was ordered, however, that if he should return after three years from Jerusalem, then the rest of his property, till that time held in sequestration, should be restored to him.—Many others abjured their heresies, but some refusing to take the oaths of subjection were excommunicated, with candles publicly lighted; and princes were ordered to expel them from their dominions. Roger, prince of the Albiensian diocese, was excommunicated.

The account of our English historians

• Rev. xvii. 13.

^a Baron. Cent. XII.

It is evident, that the term Albigenses, or rather Albienses, employed by our author, was taken from the town of Albi, where the Waldenses flourished. And, indeed, through the dominions of Raymond, earl of Toulouse, and through the south of France, including the territories of Avignon, their doctrines, at that time, spread with vast rapidity. All these were called in general Albigenses, and, in doctrine and manner, were not at all distinct from the Waldenses.

• It should be recollected, that this is the account given by Baronius, a very determined enemy of the Waldenses.

^b Baron. Cent. XII.

Hoveden¹ is similar to this of Baronius. It is remarkable, that the former calls the doctrine of the Albigenes the Arian heresy. But Arian or Manichee, or any other term of reproach sufficiently answers the design of determined persecutors. It seemed proper to give the account of the barbarous treatment of the rich old gentleman of Toulouse, who, though he recanted, was punished, because it confirms the truth of Perrin's narrative of the like persecutions, and demonstrates, from the testimony even of Roman writers, that the horrors of papal tyranny have not been misrepresented in general by protestant authors. And, on this occasion, I cannot but disapprove of the rashness or the prejudices of an able historian, who has already fallen under our notice.² He says, that the Albigenes, being examined, denied the Manichean doctrine of the two principles, though charged on that account with falsehood by their enemies: and this author believes these same enemies, who gave no proof of sincerity, that we know of, and accuses the Albigenes of dissimulation, though such numbers of them were suffering continually for their principles. The man, who undertakes to be an historian, ought to be acquainted with the writings and evidences, which are produced on both sides of a controverted subject, so far as materials can be procured. If the author before us had read with the least attention the Waldensian records, he would never have asserted, that the Waldenses were legitimate descendants of the sect of Manes.

The subjects of Raymond, earl of Toulouse, and of some other great personages in his neighbourhood, so generally professed the Waldensian doctrines, that they became the peculiar object of papal vengeance. The inhabitants of Toulouse, Carcassone, Beziers, Narbonne, Avignon, and many other cities, who were commonly called the Albigenes, were exposed to a persecution as cruel and atrocious as any recorded in history. Rainerius, indeed, owns, that the Waldenses were the most formidable enemies of the Church of Rome, "because," saith he, "they have a great appearance of godliness; because they live righteously before men, believe rightly of God in all things, and hold all the articles of the Creed; yet, they hate and revile the Church of Rome; and, in their accusations they are easily believed by the people."

It was reserved to Innocent the third, than whom no pope ever possessed more ambition, to institute the Inquisition; and the Waldenses were the first objects of its cruelty. He authorised certain monks to frame the process of that court, and to deliver the supposed heretics to the secular

power. The beginning of the thirteenth century saw thousands of persons hanged or burned by these diabolical devices, whose sole crime was, that they trusted only in Jesus Christ for salvation, and renounced all the vain hopes of self-righteous idolatry and superstition. Whoever has attended closely to the subjects of the two Epistles to the Colossians and the Galatians, and has penetrated the meaning of the Apostle, sees the great duty of HOLDING THE HEAD, and of resting for justification by faith on Jesus Christ alone, inculcated throughout them as the predominant precept of Christianity, in opposition to the rudiments of the world, to philosophy and vain deceit, to will-worship, to all dependence for our happiness on human works and devices of whatever kind. Such a person sees what is genuine protestantism, as contrasted to genuine popery; and, of course, he is convinced, that the difference is not merely verbal or frivolous, but that there is a perfect opposition in the two plans; and such as admits of no coalition or union; and that therefore the true way of withstanding the devices of Satan, is to be faithful to the great doctrine of justification by the grace of Jesus Christ, through faith alone, and not by our own works or deservings.³ Hence the very foundation of false religion is overthrown; hence troubled consciences obtain solid peace: and, faith, working by love, leads men into the very spirit of Christianity, while it comforts their hearts, and establishes them in every good work.

Schemes of religion so extremely opposite, being ardently pursued by both parties, could not fail to produce a violent rupture. In fact, the Church of Christ and the world were seen engaged in contest. Innocent, however, first tried the methods of argument and persuasion. He sent bishops and monks, who preached in those places, where the Waldensian doctrine flourished. But their success was very inconsiderable. In the neighbourhood of Narbonne two monks were employed, Peter de Chateauneuf, and Dominic.⁴ The former of these was certainly murdered; and, it seems probable, by Raymond, count of Toulouse, because he had refused to remove the excommunication, which he had denounced against that prince. Raymond himself strongly protected his Waldensian subjects, though there seems no evidence that he either understood or felt the vital influence of the protestant doctrines. But he was provoked at the imperious and turbulent measures of the monk, and saw the extreme injustice of the papal domination. He was also a witness of the purity of life and manners of his own subjects, and heard with in-

¹ Eleventh Article of Religion.

² This is the famous founder of the Dominicans, of whom I shall speak more distinctly in a separate article, and shew how far the censures of Perrin concerning him, as author of the inquisition, are founded in fact.

dignation the calumnies with which they were assailed by their adversaries, who proclaimed to all the world their own hypocrisy, avarice, and ambition. Incensed at these proceedings, Raymond seems to have taken a very unjustifiable method of extricating himself from the distresses to which the papal tyranny exposed him. But the event was disastrous; Innocent obtained what he wished, namely, a decent pretence for his horrible and most iniquitous persecution; and thousands of godly souls were unrighteously calumniated as accessory to the crime.

I need not dwell on the insidious customs of the inquisition: they are but too well known. From the year 1206, when it was first established, to the year 1228, the havoc made among helpless Christians was so great, that certain French bishops, in the last-mentioned year, desired the monks of the Inquisition to defer a little their work of imprisonment, till the pope was advertised of the great numbers apprehended; numbers so great, that it was impossible to defray the charge of their subsistence, and even to provide stone and mortar to build prisons for them. Yet so true is it, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church, that in the year 1530 there were in Europe above eight hundred thousand who professed the religion of the Waldenses.

When the Albigenses saw that the design of the pope was to gain the reputation of having used gentle and reasonable methods of persuasion, they agreed among themselves, to undertake the open defence of their principles. They therefore gave the bishops to understand, that their pastors, or some of them in the name of the rest, were ready to prove their religion to be truly scriptural in an open conference, provided the conference might be conducted with propriety. They explained their ideas of propriety by desiring, that there might be moderators on both sides, who should be vested with full authority to prevent all tumult and violence; that the conference should be held in some place, to which all parties concerned might have free and safe access; and, moreover, that some one subject should be chosen, with the common consent of the disputants, which should be steadily prosecuted, till it was fully discussed and determined; and that he, who could not maintain it by the word of God, the only decisive rule of Christians, should own himself to be confuted.

All this was something more than specious: it was perfectly equitable and unexceptionably judicious; so much so, that the bishops and monks could not with decency refuse to accept the terms. The place of conference agreed upon was Montreal near Carcassonne, in the year 1206.—The umpires on the one side were the bishops of

Villeneuve and Auterre; on the other, R. de Bot, and Anthony Rivers.

Several pastors were deputed to manage the debate for the Albigenses, of whom Arnold Hot was the principal. He arrived first at the time and place appointed. A bishop named Euzus, came afterwards on the side of the papacy, accompanied by the monk Dominic, two of the pope's legates, and several other priests and monks. The points undertaken to be proved by Arnold, were, that the mass and transubstantiation were idolatrous and unscriptural; that the Church of Rome was not the spouse of Christ, and that its polity was bad and unbely. Arnold sent these propositions to the bishop, who required fifteen days to answer him, which was granted. At the day appointed, the bishop appeared, bringing with him a large manuscript, which was read in the conference. Arnold desired to be heard by word of mouth, only intreating their patience, if he took a considerable time in answering so prolix a writing. Fair promises of a patient hearing were granted him. He discoursed for the space of four days with great fluency and readiness, and with such order, perspicuity, and strength of argument, that a powerful impression was made on the audience.

At length Arnold desired, that the bishops and monks would undertake to vindicate the mass and transubstantiation by the word of God. What they said on the occasion we are not told; but the cause of the abrupt conclusion of the conference, a matter of fact allowed on all sides, showed which party had the advantage in argument. While the two legates were disputing with Arnold at Montreal, and at the same time several other conferences were held in different places, the bishop of Villeneuve, the umpire of the papal party, declared, that nothing could be determined, because of the coming of the crusaders. What he asserted was too true: the papal armies advanced, and, by fire and faggot, soon decided all controversies. If the conferences had been continued, an historian of the real Church might have had much to relate. As the matter stands, he must withdraw: it is the business of the secular historian to relate the military achievements: some circumstances, however, which tend to illustrate the merit and conduct of the Church of Christ, must be the objects of our attention.

Arnold and his assistants were, doubtless, of the number of those, who "did truth, and therefore came to the light, that their deeds might be made manifest, that they were wrought in God." And their adversaries were of those, who hated the light, and would not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd. Amidst the darkness

• John iii.

and uncertainty in which, independently of revolution, every fundamental truth of salvation must be involved, in a world like this, and among creatures so depraved as mankind, a readiness to abide by the decisions of the divine oracles, or an unwillingness to stand the test of Scripture, demonstrates who are right and who are wrong. In all ages this has appeared to be the case; but we seldom meet with so striking an instance as this which we have reviewed. "In the sacrifice of the mass, it was commonly said, that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt." This the Church of England calls a "blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit," asserting that "there is none other satisfaction for sin, but the offering of Christ once made for all the sins of the whole world." This was one question in the controversy between the two parties, for the decision of which the Scriptures were surely very competent. The recourse, which the popish party had to arms, in the room of sober argumentation,—what was it but to pour contempt on the word of God itself, and to confess that its light was intolerably offensive to them? The approach of the crusaders, who, in the manner related, put an end to the conference, was not accidental; for Innocent, who never intended to decide the controversy by argument, on occasion of the unhappy murder of the monk before mentioned, had dispatched preachers throughout Europe, to collect all, who were willing to revenge the innocent blood of Peter of Chateaufort; promising Paradise to those, who should bear arms for forty days, and bestowing on them the same indulgences as he did on those, who undertook to conquer the Holy Land. "We, moreover, promise," says he in his bull, "to all those who shall take up arms to revenge the said murder, the pardon and remission of their sins. And since, we are not to keep faith with those, who do not keep it with God, we would have all to understand, that every person, who is bound to the said Earl Raymond by oath of allegiance, or by any other way, is absolved by apostolical authority from such obligations; and it is lawful for any Roman Catholic, to persecute the said earl, and to seize upon his country," &c.

Who is this, that forgiveth sins, except God only? and, who is this, that also dispenses with the most solemn moral obligations? Is he not Antichrist, shewing himself that he is God? On this, and some other occasions, I choose to give the very expressions of the papal bulls, as a sufficient confutation of the sophisms, by which some modern writers have endeavoured to palliate or do away the crimes of the popedom. The language, indeed, of our early protestant wri-

ters against popery is severe beyond measure; but it hardly could be equal to the desert of those whom they opposed. The most material error of the modern protestants, as I have before observed, on these subjects, seems to be, that they have been too hasty in fixing the date of the MAN OF SIN. But after he really appeared in the horrors of his maturity, he was all, which the most empasioned declaimer can say against him.

The tyrant proceeds in his bull: "we exhort you, that you would endeavour to destroy the wicked heresy of the Albigenses,—and do this with more rigour than you would use towards the Saracens themselves: persecute them with a strong hand:—deprive them of their lands and possessions: banish them; and put Roman Catholics in their room." Such was the pope's method of punishing a whole people for a single murder committed by Raymond. Philip Augustus, king of France, was at that time too much engaged in wars with Otho the emperor, and John king of England, to enter upon the crusades. But the French barons, incited by the motives of avarice, which Innocent suggested, undertook the work with vigour.

Raymond of Toulouse was now struck with terror. Political motives had fixed him with the protestant party, because his subjects and neighbours were very commonly on that side. But he himself seems to have wanted a divine principle of faith to animate his mind in the defence of the righteous cause. The other princes, his neighbours, seem equally as destitute as he was of the spirit of genuine religion. They might have resisted their enemies very vigorously by the aid of their subjects, whose loyalty was unalterably firm, and who knew it was a religious duty to be faithful to their temporal sovereigns. In those feudal times, Raymond, rather than Philip, was sovereign of the people of Toulouse: the spirit of the protestants was strong and powerful; and even the Romanists, who were mixed with them, were perfectly disposed to unite in the common defence. But I find not in all the account of the war a single instance of a prince or leader, who was faithful to the cause of God as such. No wonder then that the chiefs sunk under the load of oppression, and suffered themselves, repeatedly, to be the dupes of Roman perfidy. The Christians had then no other part to act, after having discharged the duty of faithful subjects and soldiers, but to suffer with patience the oppressions of Antichrist.

Three hundred thousand pilgrims, induced by the united motives of avarice and superstition, filled the country of the Albigenses with carnage and confusion for a number of years. The reader, who is not versed in history of this kind, can scarcely conceive

the scenes of baseness, perfidy, barbarity, indecency, and hypocrisy, over which Innocent presided; and which were conducted, partly by his legates, and partly by the infamous earl Simon of Montfort. But let it suffice to have said this in general: it is more to our purpose to observe the spirit of the people of God in these grievous tribulations. The castle of Menerbe on the frontiers of Spain, for want of water, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering to the pope's legate. A certain abbot undertook to preach to those who were found in the castle, and to exhort them to acknowledge the pope. But they interrupted his discourse, declaring that his labour was to no purpose. Earl Simon and the legate then caused a great fire to be kindled; and they burned a hundred and forty persons of both sexes. These martyrs died in triumph, praising God that he had counted them worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ. They opposed the legate to his face, and told Simon, that on the last day when the books should be opened, he would meet with the just judgment of God for all his cruelties. Several monks entreated them to have pity on themselves, and promised them their lives, if they would submit to the popedom. But the Christians "loved not their lives to the death:" only three women of the company recanted.

Another castle, named Termes, not far from Menerbe, in the territory of Narbonne, was taken by Simon in the year 1210. "This place," said Simon, "is of all others the most execrable, because no mass has been sung in it for thirty years." A remark, which gives us some idea both of the stability and numbers of the Waldenses: the very worship of popery, it seems, was expelled from this place. The inhabitants made their escape by night, and avoided the merciless hands of Simon.

A single act of humanity, exercised toward several women by this general, on the principles of chivalry, whose persons he preserved from military insult and outrage, is the only one of the kind recorded of him.

But the triumphing of the wicked is short: after he had been declared sovereign of Toulouse, which he had conquered, General of the armies of the Church, its Son, and its Darling, after he had oppressed and tyrannized over the Albigenses by innumerable confiscations and exactions, he was slain in battle in the year 1218.

Earl Raymond, whose life had been a scene of great calamity, died of sickness in the year 1222, in a state of peace and prosperity, after his victory over Simon. We are told, that, though political and humane motives at first alone influenced his conduct, he at length saw the falsity of the popish doctrine. No man, surely, was ever treated

with more injustice by the popedom. But I know no evidence of his religious knowledge and piety. His persecutor Innocent died in 1216; and the famous Dominic, who, according to the assertion of our author Perrin, was active in the inquisition, and was accustomed to the destruction which Simon had begun by arms, died in the year 1220.

Amalric of Montfort, the son of Simon, wearied out with the war, resigned to Lewis VIII. the son and successor of Philip, all his possessions and pretensions in the country of the Albigenses; in recompence of which, the French king made him constable of France in the year 1224. This was the step, which proved the ruin of the Albigenses. The French monarchy was now interested in their destruction; and, though Lewis VIII. died soon after, and Lewis IX. his son and successor was a minor, yet the capacity of the regent, the queen mother, was found equal to the work of aggrandizing the crown at the expense of the Albigenses. Raymond, the heir of his father's miseries, was treated with the most merciless barbarity; and, after a series of sufferings, he died of a fever at Milan.

Alphonbus, brother of Lewis IX. was put into possession of the earldom of Toulouse. Joan, the only daughter of the late earl Raymond, had been delivered, when only nine years old, to the French court, that she might, when of age, be married to Alphonbus. Thus secular and ecclesiastical ambition united to oppress the Churches of Christ. The monk Rainerius, whom we have had occasion repeatedly to quote, acted as inquisitor in the year 1250. There is evidence of the extreme violence of persecution continued, against the Albigenses now altogether defenceless, to the year 1281. Long before this, in the year 1229, a council was held at Toulouse, one of the canons of which was, that the laity were not allowed to have the Old or New Testament in the vulgar tongue, except a psalter or the like; and it forbade men even to translate the scriptures.

This is the first instance in the popedom which I meet with, of a direct prohibition of the books of Scripture to the laity. Indirectly the same thing had long been practised. What an honour was this canon to the cause of the Albigenses! What a confession of guilt on the side of the Romanists! The people of God were thus, at length, for the most part, exterminated in Toulouse, and found no other resource but, by patient continuance in well-doing, to commit themselves to their God and Saviour. Antichrist, for the present, was visibly triumphant in the south-west parts of France, and the witnesses "clothed in sackcloth," there consoled themselves with the hope of heavenly rest, being deprived of all prospect of earthly enjoyments.

It may not be improper to mention here, that our famous monkish historian, Matthew Paris, relates, that the Albigenses set up a person named Bartholomew for pope, who resided in the neighbourhood of Toulouse, consecrated bishops, and governed their Churches; and that in one battle the Albigenses lost a hundred thousand men with all their bishops.

These stories easily confute themselves, nor is it necessary to observe, that the ignorance of M. Paris, in French history, is palpably glaring. The only use, which I would make of this fiction is to shew, how unsafe it is to rely on rumours published, concerning subjects which affect the passions of mankind, by persons who live in places very distant from the scene of action; and to guard the minds of those among ourselves, who hear stories concerning professors of godliness, propagated by men, who are unacquainted with the grounds of religious controversy.

Dauphiny is a province of France, which was very full of the Waldenses, who inhabited vallies on both sides of the Alps. On the Italian side the valley of Pragela in particular had, in our author's time, in 1618, six churches, each having its pastor, and every pastor having the care of several villages, which appertained to his Church. The oldest people in them, Perrin observes, never remembered to have heard mass sung in their country. The valley itself was one of the most secure retreats of the Waldenses, being environed on all sides with mountains, into whose caverns the people were accustomed to retreat in time of persecution. Vignaux, one of their preachers, used to admire the integrity of the people, whom no dangers whatever could seduce from the faith of their ancestors. Their children were catechised with the minutest care: and their pastors not only exhorted them on the sabbaths, but also, on the week days went to their hamlets to instruct them. With much inconvenience to themselves these teachers climbed the steepest mountains to visit their flocks. The word of God was heard with reverence: the voice of prayer was common in private houses, as well as in the Churches: Christian simplicity and zeal abounded; and plain useful learning was diligently cultivated in the schools.

A monk inquisitor named Francis Borrelli, in the year 1380, armed with a bull of Clement VII. undertook to persecute this godly people. In the space of thirteen years, he delivered a hundred and fifty persons to the secular power to be burned at Grenoble. In the valley of Fraissiniere and the neighbourhood, he apprehended eighty persons who also were burned. The monks inquisitors adjudged one moiety of the goods of the persons condemned to themselves, the rest

to the temporal lords. What efforts may not be expected, when avarice, malice, and superstition unite in the same cause?

About the year 1400, the persecutors attacked the Waldenses of the valley of Pragela. The poor people seeing their caves possessed by their enemies, who assaulted them during the severity of the winter, retreated to one of the highest mountains of the Alps, the mothers carrying cradles, and leading by the hand those little children, who were able to walk. Many of them were murdered, others were starved to death: a hundred and eighty children were found dead in their cradles, and the greatest part of their mothers died soon after them. But why should I relate all the particulars of such a scene of infernal barbarity?

In 1460, those of the valley of Fraissiniere were persecuted by a monk of the order of Friar Minors, or Franciscans, armed with the authority of the archbishop of Ambrun. And it appears from documents preserved till the time of Perrin, that every method, which fraud and calumny could invent, was practised against them.

In the valley of Loyse, four hundred little children were found suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their deceased mothers, in consequence of a great quantity of wood being placed at the entrance of the caves and set on fire. On the whole, above three thousand persons belonging to the valley were destroyed, and this righteous people were in that place exterminated. The Waldenses of Pragela and Fraissiniere, alarmed by these sanguinary proceedings, made provision for their own safety, and expected the enemy at the passage and narrow straits of their vallies, and were in fact so well prepared to receive them, that the invaders were obliged to retreat. Some attempts were made afterwards by the Waldenses in Fraissiniere to regain their property, which had been unjustly seized by their persecutors. The favour of Lewis XII. of France, was exerted toward them; yet they could never obtain any remedy.

In Piedmont the archbishops of Turin assiduously laboured to molest the Waldenses, having been informed by the priests in those vallies, that the people made no offerings for the dead, valued not masses and absolutions, and took no care to redeem their relations from the pains of purgatory. The love of lucre, no doubt, had a principal share in promoting the persecutions; for the sums collected from the people, by the means of these and similar vanities, were immense. The princes of Piedmont, however, who were the dukes of Savoy, were very unwilling to disturb their subjects, of whose loyalty, peaceableness, industry, and probity they received such uniform testimony. A fact, which seemed peculiarly to demonstrate their general innocence must be

noticed;—their neighbours particularly prized a Piedmontese servant, and preferred the women of the valleys above all others, to nurse their children. Calumny, however, prevailed at length; and such a number of accusations against them appeared, charging them with crimes of the most monstrous nature, that the evil power permitted the papal to indulge its thirst for blood. Dreadful cruelties were inflicted on the people of God; and these, by their constancy, revived the memory of the primitive martyrs. Among them Catelin Girard was distinguished, who, standing on the block, on which he was to be burned at Revel in the marquisate of Saluces, requested his executioners to give him two stones: which request being with difficulty obtained, the martyr holding them in his hands, said, when I have eaten these stones, then you shall see an end of that religion, for which ye put me to death, and then he cast the stones on the ground.

The fires continued to be kindled till the year 1488, when the method of military violence was adopted by the persecutors. Albert de Capitaneis, archdeacon of Cremona, was deputed by pope Innocent VIII. to assault the sufferers with the sword. Eighteen thousand soldiers were raised for the service, besides many of the Piedmontese papists, who ran to the plunder from all parts. But the Waldenses, armed with wooden targets and crossbows, and availing themselves of the natural advantages of their situation, repulsed their enemies; the women and children on their knees intreating the Lord to protect his people, during the engagement.

Philip, duke of Savoy, had the candour to distinguish the spirit of resistance made by his subjects in this transaction, from a spirit of sedition and turbulence, being convinced that they had ever been a loyal and obedient people. He accepted, therefore, their apology, and forgave them what was past. But having been informed, that their young children were born with black throats; that they were hairy, and had four rows of teeth, he ordered some of them to be brought before him to Pignerol; where, having convinced himself by ocular demonstration, that the Waldenses were not monsters; he determined to protect them from the persecution. But he seems not to have had sufficient power to execute his good intentions. The papal inquisitors daily endeavoured to apprehend these sincere followers of Christ, and the persecution lasted till the year 1532. Then it was that the Piedmontese began openly to perform divine worship in their Churches. This provoked the civil power, at length, against them to such a degree, that it concurred more vigorously with the papal measures of military violence.

The Waldenses, however, defended them-

selves with courage and success: the priests left the country: the mass was expelled from Piedmont; and, whereas the people had hitherto only the New Testament and some Books of the Old translated into the Waldensian tongue, they now sent the whole Bible to the press; for, till 1535, they had only manuscripts, and those few in number. They procured, at Neuf Chatel in Switzerland, a printed Bible from one, who published the first impression of the Word of God which was seen in France. They endeavoured to provide themselves also with religious books from Geneva, but their messenger was apprehended and put to death.

The persecutions were continued against this people by Francis I. king of France, with savage barbarity; and, in particular, Jeffrey, who was burned in the castle-yard at Turin, by his piety, meekness, and constancy, made a strong impression on the minds of many.

It would be uninteresting to pursue circumstantially the story of the persecutions, which continued with more or less violence till the end of the sixteenth century, when Bartholomew Copin of the valley of Lacerna, being at Ast in Piedmont with merchandise for the fair, was apprehended for uttering some words against the papacy. The men bore his sufferings with much firmness and constancy, and resisted various attempts of the monks to overcome his spirit. He wrote to his wife, professing his entire dependence on the grace of Jesus Christ for his salvation. But he died in prison, not without suspicion of having been strangled. After his death his body was burned in the fire.

The Christian rules of submission to governments, and the practice of the Waldenses in general, were at no great variance. Yet, it is certain, that the primitive Christians would have conscientiously refused to bear arms at all against their own sovereigns, however tyrannical and oppressive they might be. Whether, in some instances, these persecuted Christians of the valleys did not violate the apostolical precepts on this subject,^a is not very easy to be decided, because it requires a very minute acquaintance with their particular circumstances, to determine who was their sovereign. Sometimes they were under the king of France; at other times under the duke of Savoy; and, it is not to be doubted, but that, at all times, they had a right to resist the pope as a foreign enemy, and an enemy of uncommon ambition, injustice, and cruelty.

At the end of the sixteenth century, in consequence of some exchange made by virtue of a treaty between Henry IV. of France and the duke of Savoy, the Waldenses of

the marquises of Saluces lost the privileges, which they had enjoyed under the French government; and, by the oppression of their new sovereign of Savoy, through the importance of the pope, were obliged to fly into France for security. Some of them, from the love of the world, renounced the faith; but the greatest part preferred exile with a good conscience, to an enjoyment of their native country. On this occasion they declared, in a well-written manifesto, their spirit of loyalty and peaceableness, the hardships of their case, and their perfect agreement in principle with all the reformed Churches. So certain is it, that the Waldenses were, in every substantial article, genuine protestants and witnesses of evangelical truth.

A number of Waldenses, who resided in the Alps, possessed several villages, and, in particular, the city of Barcelonnette. These, being persecuted by the prince of Piedmont in the year 1570, in conjunction with some others, implored the protestant princes to intercede with their sovereign on their behalf. The prince palatine of the Rhine exerted himself with much zeal on the occasion. But the people of Barcelonnette being obliged to leave their settlements, amidst a choice of difficulties were reduced to the extremity of attempting, in the midst of winter, to pass over a high mountain. The greatest part of them perished; the rest retired into the valley of Fraissiniere.

About the year 1570 some of the Waldensian youths of Dauphiny sought in Calabria a new settlement, because their native country was too small for the number of the inhabitants. Finding the soil fertile, and the region thinly peopled, they applied to the proprietors of the lands, and treated with them concerning the conditions of dwelling there. The lords of the country gave them the most kind reception, agreed with them on fair and equitable terms, and assigned them parcels of lands. The new colonists soon enriched and fertilized their respective districts by superior industry: and, by probity, peaceable manners, and punctual payment of their rents, they gained the affections of their landlords, and of all their neighbours. The priests alone, who found that they did not act like others in religion, and that they contributed nothing to the support of the hierarchy by masses for the dead, or by other Romish formalities, were highly offended. They were particularly vexed to find, that certain foreign school-masters, who taught the children of these strangers, were held in high respect, and that they themselves received nothing from them except tithes, which were paid according to the compact with their lords. From these circumstances, the priests concluding that the strangers must be heretics, were tempted

to complain of them to the pope. The lords, however, withheld them from complaining of the people. "They are just and honest," say they, "and have enriched all the country. Even ye priests have received substantial emolument from their labours. The tithes alone, which ye now receive, are so much superior to those, which were formerly produced from these countries, that you may well bear with some losses on other accounts. Perhaps the country, whence they came, is not so much addicted to the ceremonies of the Roman Church. But as they fear God, are liberal to the needy, just and beneficent to all men, it is ungenerous anxiously to scrutinize their consciences. For are they not a temperate, sober, prudent people, not given to pleasures and excess of riot like others, and in their words peculiarly decent? and does any person ever hear them utter a blasphemous expression?" The lords admiring their tenants, who were distinguished from the inhabitants all around by probity and virtue, maintained and protected them against their enemies, till the year 1560.

In all this the fruits of godliness among the Waldenses were apparent, even to those, who knew not the nature of godliness itself. The lords, moved by temporal interest, behaved with candour, while the priests, who felt, or thought they felt their interest undermined by these strangers, murmured and expressed their indignation. It is not to be wondered at, that the priests of idolatry should every where be the greatest enemies of true religion. It is nothing more than the natural effect of human depravity. Their passions, through the medium of interest, are more sensibly struck at than those of others; and the true use to be made of such events is, for all men, laity as well as priests, to learn the true doctrine of the fall of man, and its consequences. The Calabrian Waldenses sent to Geneva in the year 1560, to request a supply of pastors. Two, namely, Stephen Negrin, and Lewis Paschal, were sent into Calabria; who endeavoured to establish the public exercise of protestantism, Pope Pius IV. having notice of this, determined to extirpate a people, who had presumed to plant Lutheranism,—so he called their religion,—so near to his seat. What follows of the history of this people is a distressful scene of persecution. Numbers of them being murdered, by two companies of soldiers headed by the pope's agents, the rest craved mercy for themselves, their wives, and children, declaring, that if they were permitted to leave the country with a few conveniences, they would not return to it any more. But their enemies knew not how to shew mercy; and the persecuted Christians at length undertook to defend themselves from their invaders, and they put them to flight.

The viceroy of Naples, hearing of these things, appeared in person to prosecute the diabolical business of the pope; and, in a little time, the Calabrian Waldenses were entirely exterminated. The most barbarous cruelties were inflicted on many: some were tortured, in order to oblige them to own, that their friends had committed the most flagitious incests; and the whole apparatus of pagan persecution was seen to be revived in the south of Italy.

A certain youth, named Samson, defended himself a long time against those, who came to apprehend him. But being wounded, he was, at length, taken and led to the top of a tower. Confess yourself to a priest here present, said the persecutors, before you be thrown down. I have already, said Samson, confessed myself to God. Throw him down from the tower, said the inquisitor. The next day the viceroy passing below near the said tower, saw the poor man yet alive, with all his bones broken. He kicked him with his foot on the head, saying, is the dog yet alive? give him to the hogs to eat.

But I turn from a scene, where there is nothing but a repetition of enormities, which have often been exposed in the course of this history, and which equally shew the influence of the prince of darkness and the enmity of the carnal mind against God: let it suffice to add, that Stephen Megrin was starved to death in prison, and that Lewis Paschal was conveyed to Rome, where he was burned alive in the presence of Pius IV. That tyrant feasted his eyes with the sight of the man in the flames, who had dared to call him Antichrist. Paschal, however, was enabled to testify, in his last scenes, from the word of God, many things which much displeased the pope; and, by the zeal, constancy, and piety, which he displayed in his death, he failed not to excite the pity and admiration of the spectators.

The Waldenses of Provence fertilized a barren soil by their industry, but, like their brethren elsewhere, were exposed to persecution. An attempt was made to prejudice the mind of Lewis XII. against them, about the year 1506, by such calumnies as those, with which the primitive Christians were aspersed. The king, struck with horror, directed the parliament of Provence to investigate the charges and to punish those, who were found guilty. But afterwards understanding, that some innocent men were put to death, he sent two persons to inquire into the conduct of this people, by whose distinct information he was so thoroughly convinced of their innocence, that he swore they were better men than himself and his Catholic subjects; and he protected them during the rest of his reign. Thus the candour, humanity, and generosity of that monarch, who was deservedly looked on as the father of his

people, was providentially instrumental in the defence of the Waldenses.

Some time after, these Provencal protestants wrote a letter to the reformer Ecolampadius of Basle, which, as a monument of Christian, humility and simplicity, well deserves to be transcribed. "Health to Mr. Ecolampadius. Whereas several persons have given us to understand, that he, who is able to do all things, hath replenished you with his Holy Spirit, as it conspicuously appears by the fruits; we, therefore, have recourse to you from a far country, with a steadfast hope, that the Holy Ghost will enlighten our understanding by your means, and give us the knowledge of several things, in which we are now doubtful, and which are hidden from us, because of our slothful ignorance and remissness, to the great damage, as we fear, both of ourselves and of the people, of whom we are the unworthy teachers. That you may know at once how matters stand with us, we, such as we are, poor instructors of this small people, have undergone, for above four hundred years, most cruel persecutions, not without signal marks of the favour of Christ; for he hath interposed to deliver us, when under the harrow of severe tribulations. In this our state of weakness we come to you for advice and consolation."

They wrote in the same strain to other reformers, and were, it seems, so zealous to profit by their superior light and knowledge, that they willingly exposed themselves, by this means, to a share of the same persecutions which at that time oppressed the Lutherans,—so the reformed were then generally called,—both in France and through all Europe.

Ecolampadius, in the year 1530, wrote to the Waldenses of Provence, to protest against the crime of attending the mass and bowing before idols, with which some of them were infected: shewing that a public declaration of making satisfaction for the sins of the living and the dead by the mass, was the same thing as to say, that Jesus Christ hath not made sufficient expiation, that he is no Saviour, and died for us in vain; and that, if it be lawful for us to conceal our faith under the tyranny of Antichrist, it would have been lawful to worship Jupiter or Venus with Dioclesian. These admonitions were well adapted to the circumstances of the Waldenses; for they soon after had large occasion to practise them. Even one of the messengers who brought the letters, was seized on his journey at Dijon, and condemned to death as a Lutheran. In the parliament of Aix, in the year 1540, one of the most inhuman edicts recorded in history was pronounced against the Provencal Christians. It was ordered that the country of Merindol should be laid waste, and the woods cut down, to the compass of two hun-

dead, piers around. The name and authority of King Francis I. was obtained by surprise, and the revocation of the edict, which he afterwards sent to the parliament on better information, was suppressed by the persecutors. The murders, rapes, and desolations were horrible beyond all description. In particular, a number of women were shut up in a barn full of straw, which was set on fire; and a soldier, moved with compassion, having opened a place for them that they might escape, these helpless victims of papal rage were driven back into the flames by pikes and halberds. Other cruelties were practised on this occasion so horrid, that they might seem to exceed belief, were not the authenticity of the accounts unquestionable; and he, who knows what human nature is, when left to itself and to Satan, knows that there is no evil of which it is not capable.

In justice, however, to Francis I. a prince in his temper by no means cruel and oppressive, it is proper to add, that being informed of the execution of this barbarous edict, to which he had with great precipitation given his name, he was filled with bitter remorse, being now at the point of death, and he charged his son Henry to punish the murderers. The advocate Geurin, however, was the only person, who was punished on the occasion. He was, in truth, the most guilty, because it was he, who had suppressed the king's revocation of the bloody edict.

Those, who had escaped, afterwards by degrees recovered their possessions, and taking advantage of the edict of Nantes, enjoyed the protection of government, in common with the rest of the protestants in France.

If we look into Bohemia, the country in which Waldo ended his days, we find that the Waldensian Churches existed there in the fourteenth century, but that they had been broken up as a professing people, when the Hussites,—of whom hereafter,—began to flourish. The Hussites were later than they by two hundred and forty years, and are allowed, by their own writers, to have agreed in principle with the Waldenses; none of whose writings, however, were extant in Bohemia at the time when the doctrine of Huss was received in that country. So completely had papal tyranny prevailed! but Providence raised up other witnesses.

In Austria, the number of Waldenses was exceedingly great. About the year 1467, the Hussites entered into a Christian correspondence with them; in the course of which they gently rebuked them on account of the idolatrous compliances too visible in their churches. The Hussites also found fault with them, because they were too solicitous in amassing wealth. "Every day," say they, "has its cares and afflictions; but as Christians ought to look only for heavenly riches, we cannot but condemn your excessive at-

tention to the world, by which you may gradually be induced to set your whole heart on the things of time and sense." This looks like the language of younger converts, who, having not yet forsaken their "first-love," are apt to see the evils of a worldly spirit in a stronger light, even than older and more experienced Christians, who may have sunk into lukewarmness. It should be remembered, that the Hussites were, at this time, beginners in religion, compared to the Waldenses. These latter were, however, exposed soon after this to terrible persecutions; and those of them, who escaped, fled into Bohemia, and united themselves to the Hussites.

In Germany, in the year 1330, the papal inquisition oppressed the Waldenses with peculiar severity. They were, notwithstanding, steadfast in their profession; and their pastors publicly announced the pope to be Antichrist, affirming, that if God had not sent them into Germany to preach the Gospel, the very stones would have been raised up to instruct mankind. "We give not," say they, "a fictitious remission, but we preach the remission of sins appointed by God himself in his Word." About the year 1330, Echard, a dominican monk, an inquisitor, grievously oppressed them. At length, after many cruelties, he urged the Waldenses to inform him of the real cause of their separation from the Church of Rome, being convinced in his conscience of the justice of several of their charges. This was an opportunity, not often vouchsafed to this people by their enemies, of using the weapons of Christian warfare. The event was salutary: Echard was enlightened, confessed the faith of Christ, united himself to his people, like Paul he preached the faith which once he destroyed, and, in the issue, was burned at Heidelberg; and the Christians glorified God in him.

Raynard Lollard was another convert of the same kind, at first a Franciscan and an enemy to the Waldenses. He was taken by the inquisitors after he had diligently taught the Gospel, and was burned at Cologne. From him the Wickliffites in England were called Lollards; and he it was, who instructed the English who resided in Guienne, in the Waldensian doctrine. The connection between France and England, during the whole reign of Edward III. was so great, that it is by no means improbable, that Wickliff himself,—of whom more hereafter,—derived his first impressions of religion from Lollard. Princes and states may carry on wars and negotiations with one another; while he, who rules all things, makes every event subservient to the great design of spreading the kingdom of his Son.

Flanders was also a violent scene of Waldensian persecution, though our author seems to know little of the particulars. From another writer^p it appears, that in 1163 some of the Waldenses retired from Flanders to Cologne. Here they were discovered and confined in a barn. Egbert, an abbot, disputed with them: three were burned; and a young woman, whom the people would have spared, threw herself into the flames. In 1183, great numbers were burned alive. A person named Robert, first a Waldensian, afterwards a Dominican, was appointed inquisitor-general by the pope. This man, knowing the usual places of concealment, burned or buried alive above fifty persons in the year 1236. But he met with that punishment in this life, which was calculated to convince him of his enormous sin. The pope suspended him for the abuse of his power, and condemned him to perpetual imprisonment.

Persecutors in Flanders tormented the Christians by means of hornets, wasps, and hives of bees. The people of God, however, were strong in faith and love. They turned the Scripture into Low-Dutch rhymes, for the edification of the brethren; and they gave this reason for the practice. "In Scripture there are jests, fables, trifles or deceptions; but words of solid truth. Here and there, indeed, is an hard crust; but the marrow and sweetness of what is good and holy, may easily be discovered in it." A peculiar regard for Holy Writ, amidst ages of darkness, forms the glory of the Waldensian Churches.

England, because of its insular situation, knew less of all these scenes than the continent. But the striking narrative of the sufferers, in the time of Henry II. which has been recorded, ought to be added to the list of Waldensian persecutions. No part of Europe, in short, was exempt from the sufferings of these Christian heroes. Paris itself, the metropolis of France, saw, in 1304, a hundred and fourteen persons burned alive, who bore the flames with admirable constancy.

Thus largely did the "King of Saints"^q provide for the instruction of his Church, in the darkness of the middle ages. The Waldenses are the middle link, which connects the primitive Christians and fathers with the reformed; and, by their means, the proof is completely established, that salvation, by the grace of Christ, felt in the heart and expressed in the life, by the power of the Holy Ghost, has ever existed from the time of the Apostles till this day; and that it is a doctrine marked by the Cross, and distinct from all that religion of mere form or convenience, or of human invention, which calls itself

Christian, but which wants the Spirit of Christ.

CHAPTER V.

THE GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

It was judged proper, to give one unbroken narrative of Waldensian transactions in Ecclesiastical matters, till the time of the Reformation.

That narrative is contained in the few last Chapters; and though it does not belong to the thirteenth century exclusively, it is, however, as was before observed, ascribed to it, because in the course of the thirteenth century, most extraordinary persecutions and conflicts took place among the Waldenses, and particularly excited the attention of Europe. Our immediate business must now be the continuation of that Century.

From the animosity of the Waldensian persecutions, and from the unanimity, with which the powers of the earth, both secular and ecclesiastical, supported these persecutions, the reader is prepared already to conclude, that, abstracted from the Churches of the vallies and their connections, there was scarcely in Europe, at that time, a visible church of Christ to be found. But there were, as the Waldenses confessed, some "individual souls in Babylon," who loved the Lord, and served him with their spirit under all these disadvantages. I shall reserve to the two next chapters the distinct account of these individuals.

In this chapter I propose to give a view of the general state of Christendom, which, though it be an indirect method of illustrating the circumstances of the real Church of Christ, is yet the only one, which the depavity of the times can afford us.

The gloom of ignorance was immensely great, nor was it abated, but, in some respects, rather increased, by the growing celebrity of the Aristotelian philosophy. For by it the understandings of men were furnished with polemical weapons, but by no means enlightened with useful truths. Endless questions were started; and as every disputant, by the very nature of the learning then in vogue, was much more engaged in confounding his adversary, than in explaining any one object of science, hence, every serious inquirer after truth must have been embarrassed beyond measure. The controversial combatants, while they raised and agitated the dust of contentions, suffocated each other, and gave no real light si-

^p Brandt's Hist. of the Refor. in the Netherlands.
^q Rev. xv. 3.

ther to themselves, or to the world in general. The unlettered part of mankind admired their "seraphic" skill and ingenuity, little suspecting that these disputatious doctors were not, in their knowledge, many degrees removed above the most ignorant and vulgar. Some few there were of superior genius and penetration, who saw through the sophistry of the fashionable learning, and cultivated a more reasonable mode of intellectual improvement.

Roger Bacon, the Franciscan friar, stands distinguished among these. His knowledge of astronomy, optics, and mathematics, as well as of Greek and Oriental learning, was wonderful for those times. But he and a very few others shone in vain, except to themselves, in the firmament of knowledge. All feared, scarce any aided, and very few understood them. Bacon himself, the glory of the British nation, was many years confined in a loathsome prison, and was strongly suspected of dealing in magic. I know no evidence of his piety and love of evangelical truth; and therefore it is not pertinent to the design of this history to enlarge on his character. But a few words expressive of his contempt of the learning of his contemporaries deserve to be quoted. "Never," says he, "was there so great an appearance of wisdom, nor so much exercise of study, in so many faculties and in so many countries, as within these last forty years. For doctors are every where dispersed, in every city and borough, especially by the two studious orders, when at the same time there never was so great ignorance. The herd of students fatigue themselves, and play the fool about the miserable translations of Aristotle, and lose their time, their labour, and their expense. Appearances alone engage them; and they have no care to acquire real knowledge, but only to seem knowing in the eyes of the senseless multitude."

Bacon, by the two studious orders, means the Dominicans and Franciscans, who were almost the only orders, which devoted themselves to study.—These men had AMPLE buildings and princely houses. They attended the death-beds of the rich and great, and urged them to bequeath immense legacies to their own orders.—The subtle jargon of the schools infected their whole semblance of learning. However, as they appeared more knowing, and were certainly more studious than the other orders, they gained much ground in this century; and indeed, till the time of the institution of the Jesuits, they were the pillars of the papacy. Persecution of heretics, so called, formed a great art of their employment. The Domini-

cans" in particular were the founders of the inquisition. These last came into England about the year 1221, and first appeared at Oxford. The Franciscans were first settled at Canterbury in 1234. They both cultivated the Aristotelian philosophy, and being the confidential agents of the pope, they, under various pretences, exacted large sums of money through the kingdom, and fleeced even the abbots of the monasteries. The bishops and secular clergy saw themselves excluded by these means from the confidence of the laity. For, in auricular confessions, and other superstitions of the times, the friars had, by the pope's authority, very much arrogated to themselves the power, which had formerly been possessed by the Clergy.*

The Franciscans particularly undermined the influence of the secular ecclesiastics by popular practices: they preached both in towns and in the country: they pretended to no property: they lived on contributions of their audiences, and walked barefoot and in mean habits. On Sundays and holidays crowds were collected to hear them; and they were received as confessors in preference to the bishops and clergy: and thus, when the credit of the other monastic orders was well nigh exhausted, and the secular clergy, through immoralities had been reduced to contempt, two new orders, having the semblance of worth, not the substance, revived the authority of the Romish Church, supported the papacy, strengthened every reigning superstition, and, by deep-laid plans of hypocrisy, induced numbers to enrich both the papacy and the monastic foundations.

A remarkable instance of papal tyranny, exercised through their means in this century, will shew the abject slavery and superstition under which this island groaned. In 1247 Innocent IV. gave a commission to John the Franciscan, as follows: "We charge you, that, if the major part of the English prelates should make answer, that they are exempt from foreign jurisdiction, you demand a greater sum, and compel them, by ecclesiastical censures, to withdraw their appeals, any privilege or indulgence notwithstanding."

This was the famous "non obstante clause," by which the pope, in the plenitude of his dominion, assumed to himself the same dispensing power in the Church, which king James II. did long after in the state. But the punishment of the former for his temerity and arrogance followed not so soon as in the case of the latter. For God had put into the hearts of princes and statesmen to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of

* Bonaventura was called the seraphic doctor; Francis the seraphic father.

† Mosheim, Vol. 637.

‡ History of the Abbey of St. Alban by Newman.

* These were also called Jacobins, from their settlement in St. James's street in Paris.

• Hist. Abbey of St. Alban's.

God should be fulfilled." And thus the wickedness of men in neglecting his gospel was justly punished.

So shameless were the popes at this time in their exactions, and so secure was their hold on the abject superstition of mankind, that they grossly defrauded even the Franciscans themselves, and were not afraid of the consequences. Men, who received not the testimony of Jesus Christ, and refused submission to his easy yoke, were induced to kiss the iron rod of an Italian tyrant.

Two observations of Matthew Paris, taken from different parts of his history, and compared together, seem to me to illustrate in a good degree the nature of the subjection in which the spirits of men were held in those times. Speaking of the innumerable oppressions and corruptions of the popedom, which particularly prevailed during the long reign of king Henry III. the pusillanimous successor of king John, he breaks out into an animated apostrophe to the Pope. "Holy Father, why do you permit such disorders? you deserve the hardships you undergo: you deserve to wander like Cain through the earth.—I would know what preferment an Englishman ever obtains in Italy? what just reason can possibly be assigned, why foreigners should prey on the revenues of our church?—Our sins have brought these calamities upon us."^x The historian alludes to the residence of Innocent IV. at Lyons, where he was obliged to hide himself from the factions, which had expelled him from Italy at that time. I observe also, that this is that same pope, who gave the imperious commission to John the Franciscan mentioned above, which commission also was dated from Lyons. If the reader lay all these circumstances together, the unexampled tyranny of the papal measures, the shameless violation of every principle of equity and decorum in the conduct of the Italian legates and agents, the strong indignation expressed against these things by such learned men as Matthew Paris, and even the open opposition made to the pope in those times, he may be disposed to wonder why the Roman hierarchy was not destroyed by a combination of princes and states. If this be a difficulty, the consideration of another passage of Matthew Paris will sufficiently explain it. Though he himself has given us the plainest accounts of the enormities of king John, who was beyond question, in every light, one of the worst of princes, and one of the worst of men, yet he observes, "We ought to hope, and most assuredly to trust, that some good works, which he did in this life, will plead for him before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. For he built one Abbey, and dying bequeathed a sum of money to another." So grossly ig-

norant was this ingenious and valuable historian of the all-important article of justification by the merit of Jesus Christ alone through faith! It was the revival of this article, which subverted the foundation of the Roman religion at the time of the Reformation. For while men allow themselves to doubt of the sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour, so long as the conscience is harassed with doubts or perplexities, it will naturally betake itself to any superstitions which happen to prevail, in order to pacify the mind. And the popedom held out, by monastic institutions, and a variety of other means, such a quantity of false reliefs to a guilty conscience, that even the shameless king John might seem to merit the kingdom of heaven by certain good works. M. Paris himself was entangled in the same nets of pharisaical religion. So were the greater part of mankind throughout Europe at that time. We have seen, however, that the Waldenses could find peace and relief of conscience, and the expectation of heaven through Jesus Christ alone by faith; and hence, were enabled to despise the whole popedom with all its appendages; while others, who trembled in conscience for their sins, and knew not the holy wisdom of resting on Christ alone for salvation, might swell with indignation at the wickedness of the court of Rome, but durst not emancipate themselves from its bonds. It has been said by those, who are willing to palliate the Roman abominations, that such a power as that of the pope was necessary at that time to tame the ferocious spirits of men; and that the power of the pope preserved some order in society. It may be allowed that it was a cement, but it was a cement of iniquity. Men were held by it in the cords of superstition, and were even encouraged to live in wickedness, by false hopes of heaven. Such hopes did not sanctify but corrupt their minds: whereas the faith of Christ at once gives peace to the conscience, and leads it to true holiness.

To do justice to the real protestant character, which began with Claudius of Turin, and at length produced the Reformation, it ought to be known, that the idolatry, the encouragement of sin, and the self-righteous superstitions subversive of the real merit of Christ, and the grace of the Gospel, were no less flagrant in the popedom than they have been represented, and were understood to be by our fathers. Therefore, against some modern attempts to give a specious colour to the Roman abominations, it may be proper, in addition to what has already been stated, to give two authentic facts, which will not need much comment.

In the year 1234, pope Gregory IX. willing to revive the cause of the eastern crusades, which, through a series of disastrous events, was now much on the decline; and

feeling the connection between this cause and the credit of the popedom, by a bull directed to all Christendom, invited men to assume the cross, and proceed to the Holy Land. "Notwithstanding," says he, "the ingratitude of Christians; the goodness of God is not withdrawn from them. His providence is still actively engaged to promote the happiness of mankind: his remedies suit their temper; his prescriptions are proportioned to the disease.—The service to which they are now invited is an EFFECTUAL ATONEMENT for the miscarriages of a negligent life: the discipline of a regular penance would have discouraged many offenders so much, that they would have had no heart to venture upon it: but the HOLY WAR is a compendious method of discharging men from guilt, and restoring them to the divine favour. Even, if they die on their march, the intention will be taken for the deed, and many in this way may be crowned without fighting."

As I have ventured to contradict some positions of Mosheim and other protestant writers, who seemed to me to date the gross corruptions of popedom too early, so the same regard for veracity, which is the capital quality of a real historian, requires me to bear witness to the strict truth of their representations of Romish evils, in the times in which they really did prevail. In opposition, therefore, to the glosses of those, who seem to maintain, that papal indulgences had no connection with men's eternal state, but related only to their ecclesiastical privileges in this life, let it be submitted to the reader, whether every person who reads the bull of Gregory IX. must not have understood, that he pretended in the name of God to absolve crusaders from real guilt, and to ensure to them the kingdom of heaven itself: whether he did not in effect oppose the doctrine of the atonement of Christ, and teach men to ground their justification from God, in contempt of that atonement, on the merit of the performance of the military service, which he enjoined. It is easy to multiply futile distinctions; but to what purpose are they introduced at all, when the obvious practical sense of the bull could only be that, which I have mentioned, when it was so understood, and when it induced men to act with such hopes and views as have been stated?

Indeed while severe penances had been in repute, and men were in the habit of submitting to undergo them, the atonement of Christ had long been rendered in effect insignificant; and self-righteous prospects of the divine favour had been encouraged throughout the Christian world. But the evil was now multiplied exceedingly. The additional doctrine of commutation for penances, while it removed the mind still far-

ther from the faith of Christ, and fixed its dependence more strongly on the popedom, opened the floodgates of wickedness and vice, taught men to gratify every disposition of corrupt nature, and to believe such gratifications consistent with a prospect of gaining the divine favour, even while they remained as impure in heart and life as ever. It is then to no purpose for men to declaim with M. Paris against the corruptions of this or that pope, while with him they maintain the self-righteous principle of popery itself. Evils of the worst kind must prevail, while we think ourselves capable of making atonement for our sins by any kind of works whatever. Let us learn the true humility and the genuine faith of the Gospel, which works by the love of God and man; and then the practical evils will vanish for want of a foundation. Protestants will always have a strong temptation to embrace some self-righteous notions, as those of popery or socinianism, or perhaps they may ultimately have recourse to atheism itself, when they neglect the real peculiarity of Christianity. These considerations merit a very serious attention: they evince the importance of the reformation itself, and illustrate the nature of its fundamental principles.

The other fact, which demonstrates the genuine character of the religion which predominated in Europe, I have extracted from a work lately published.* John Maryns was abbot of St. Alban's about the end of the thirteenth century, whose dying words are recorded to have been to this effect. "O holy Alban, whom I have loved and addressed as my best aid! as I have existed and lived by thy help, so, O glorious Saint! defend me from the pains of hell." Who this same Alban was, or whether he ever existed at all, are questions not easily answered, nor is it material to our purpose to inquire whether he was a real or a fictitious saint; but it is evident that John Maryns, by a solemn act of worship, placed the same confidence in him, which Stephen did in Jesus Christ, when he committed his departing spirit into his hands. The distinctions, it seems, insisted on by the papists, between the higher and inferior kinds of worship, are futile evasions. Serious worshippers of their communion practically opposed the fundamental maxim of Christianity, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man."¹ The devotions of Maryns were perfectly analogous to those then in fashion. The idolatry of the Romish communion is evident; and, when the reader recollects what has been said of the doctrines of the Waldenses, he will see how far their representations of Antichrist are founded in fact.

* Hist. of the Abbey of St. Alban's by Newcome, p. 203.

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

That the ecclesiastical powers in these miserable times were not at all inclined to promote piety and virtue among their subjects, but that they studied chiefly their secular emoluments, appears from numberless evidences in this century. Let it suffice in this place to mention two. First, the Franciscans and Dominicans were employed in enlisting men into the service of the crusades by Gregory IX. the author of the infamous bull mentioned above. These men engaged in the business with much ardour: and it often happened that persons, who in the warmth of zeal had taken the cross, repented afterwards, when they began to think seriously of the difficulties of the enterprise. The friars were employed to relieve such devotees from their vows, on the payment of a fine. It may easily be conceived, that much wealth would be amassed by this dispensing power.^b Secondly, in 1242 Innocent IV. sent a provisional bull to king Henry III. of England, which informed him, that if he should happen to lay violent hands on an ecclesiastic, and to fall under the censure of the canons, he might be absolved on submitting to the customary penance!"

At this time, during the prevalence of the Aristotelian philosophy, the doctrine of "grace of congruity" was in high repute: in other words, justification by men's own works was insisted on: and while some decent shew of respect was paid in words to the merits of Christ, the real meritorious objects, on which men were taught to place their hope, were some performances, by which they might, in a lower sense, deserve grace, and purchase the application of it to themselves.^c Thus, a religion prevailed, which accommodated all sorts of sinners. Those of a more decent cast were taught to expect the divine favours by their own works, which deserved grace of congruity; and the most scandalous transgressors, by the doctrine of commutation for offences, might still obtain forgiveness: the exercise of munificence toward the hierarchy was sure to cover all crimes; but the humble and the contrite alone, who felt what sin is, and sighed for a remedy, found no relief to consciences, which could not admit the delusive refreshments provided by the papacy. These, either mourned in secret, and poured out their souls to that God, who says to his creatures, "seek and ye shall find," or if they united themselves in a body of faithful people, maintained the character of those, "of whom the world was not worthy," and suffered the extremities of persecution, under the name of Waldenses.

The Scripture in all this time was neglected: the knowledge of the Hebrew

tongue was in a great measure lost; and, as if the prince of darkness, through the medium of ignorance and superstition, had not sufficiently blinded the minds of men in religious concerns, even the learning itself, which was reviving, became a powerful instrument of augmenting the general obscurity. For the schoolmen, admitting no first principles, reasoned on every subject, and thus involved every religious notion in sceptical intricacy. The word of God itself was not appealed to, but Aristotle and the fathers were considered as decisive.*

That sophistical kind of learning, which Roger Bacon denied, was thriving throughout all this period. And in 1252 the college of divines at Paris, called Sorbonne, was erected by Robert De Sorbonne, a particular friend of Lewis IX.^f

With what difficulties men, who truly feared God in Europe at that day, had to grapple in working out their salvation, is abundantly evident from this review. Not even nobility of rank could secure such persons from the horrors of persecution. Some noblemen in Alsace had dared to reprehend the conduct of Innocent II., particularly his imposition of celibacy on the clergy. The bishops of that country had influence enough to oppress these innovators; and, in one day they burnt in the flames a hundred of them or their associates. Individuals, however, there doubtless were, who, having no opportunity of Christian fellowship, worshipped God in secret, and found that UNCTIO FACIT THE HOLY ONE WHICH TEACHETH ALL THINGS.^g

Of the eastern Churches scarce any thing worthy of relation occurs: yet it may be proper to mention, that in the year 1299 Othman in the East, was proclaimed Sultan, and founded a new empire. The people afterwards, as well as the emperor, were called after his name. The mixed multitude, of which this people was composed, were the remains of four sultanies which had for some time subsisted in the neighbourhood of the river Euphrates. Thus the four angels, which were bound in Euphrates, were loosed, and under the name of TURKS succeeded the Saracens both in the propagation of Mahometanism, and in diffusing the horrors of war.^h Providence had destined them to scourge the people of Europe for their idolatry and flagitiousness; and Europe still repented not. But the divine prophecies were fulfilled—and "he may run that readeth."

* Preface to 13th Cent. Magdeburg.

^f Mosheim, 12th Cent. Part. II. Cap. I. Sect. III.

^g 1 John II. 27.

^h Rev. II.—Newton, 3d Vol. Prophecies, p. 126.

^b Collier, Vol. I.

^c Collier, Vol. I.

^d Thirteenth Article of the Church of England.

CHAPTER VI.

AUTHORS AND EMINENT PERSONS IN THIS CENTURY.

On the subject of the propagation of the Gospel scarce any thing occurs in this age. The godly spirit of missionaries, which had been the glory of the declining Church, was by this time exhausted; so extensively had the papal corruptions prevailed. The only accession to the Christian name in Europe seems to have been the conversion, as it is called, of the Prussians, Lithuanians, and some adjoining provinces.

Prussia was one of the last regions of the north, which bowed under the yoke of the popedom. The ignorance, brutality, and ferocity of the inhabitants were uncommonly great. The Teutonic knights, after they had lost their possessions in Palestine, took the cross against the Prussians, and, after a long and bloody war, forced them to receive the name of Christ; but I know no evidences of piety, either in the missionaries or in the proselytes. The destruction, however, of the old idolatry, and the introduction of something of Christianity, would eventually, at least, prove a blessing to this people.

Arsenius, bishop of Constantinople, will deserve a place in these memoirs. After that Constantinople was taken by the French and Venetians, the seat of the Greek empire had been transferred to Nice in Bithynia, of which metropolis, under the reign of Theodorus Lascaris, Arsenius was appointed bishop. He was renowned for piety and simplicity, and had lived a monastic life near Apollonia. Theodorus, a little before his death, constituted him one of the guardians of his son John, an infant in the sixth year of his age. But the integrity and virtue of the bishop were no security against the ambition and perfidy of the times. Michael Palaeologus usurped the sovereignty; and Arsenius at length, with reluctance, overpowered by the influence of the nobility, consented to place the diadem on his head, with this express condition, that he should resign the empire to the royal infant when he should come to maturity.

Arsenius, after he had made this concession, had the mortification to find his pupil treated with perfect disregard; and, probably, repenting of what he had done, he retired from his See to a monastery. Sometime after, by a sudden revolution, Palaeologus recovered Constantinople from the Latins; but, amidst all his successes, he found it necessary to his reputation to recall the bishop, and he fixed him in the metropolitan See. So great was the ascendancy of the character of a virtuous prelate over the poli-

tics of an unprincipled usurper, though covered with secular glory! Palaeologus, however, still dreaded the youth, whom he had so deeply injured, and to prevent him from recovering the throne, he had recourse to the barbarous policy of putting out his eyes. Arsenius hearing this, excommunicated the emperor, who then made some pretences of repentance. But the bishop refused to admit him into the Church; and Palaeologus had the baseness to accuse him of certain crimes before an assembly of priests. Arsenius was convened before the vernal assembly, condemned, and banished to a small island of the Propontis. But, conscious of his integrity, he bore his sufferings with serenity and composure; and, requesting that an account might be taken of the treasures of the Church, he shewed that three pieces of gold, which he had earned by transcribing psalms were the whole of his property. This same emperor, who had the meanness, by false accusation, to expel Arsenius from his See, still confessed, how much wickedness stands in awe of virtue, by soliciting him to repeal his ecclesiastical censures. The deprived prelate, however, who never had been fond of sacerdotal dignity, remained content with his obscurity, and, to his last breath, refused the request of the usurper, who still retained the wages of his iniquity.¹

Gibbon relates this story with no material variation from the account, which I have given. But, in his usual manner, he ridicules and scoffs at the virtuous patriarch, and ascribes his professions of disinterestedness to sullenness and vain glory. How must an ecclesiastic conduct himself, in order to procure the approbation of this historian? If the Christian hero before us (for he seems to have truly feared God) had flattered and gratified the usurper in all his desires and demands, we should then have heard of his hypocrisy and ambition. Now that he voluntarily descends from a state of grandeur to poverty, disgrace, and exile, for the sake of a good conscience, he must be suspected of sullenness and pride. But by their fruits men are to be known; and, by them, so far as they appear in this case, we may form a judgment of Arsenius, of Palaeologus, and of Gibbon.

We have given an instance of a bishop, in the east, who feared God. Let us now behold a similar instance of uprightness in a bishop of the west. John Scot, bishop of Dunkeld, died in the year 1202. He was an Englishman, who had been archdeacon of St. Andrews, and thence was preferred to this See.² The man was conspicuous in that corrupt age for pastoral vigilance and a conscientious conduct. The county of Argyll was part of his diocese, and, in that

¹ Cent. Magd. 461. Nicephorus.

² Collier, Vol. I. page 411.

county, the people understood only the Irish tongue. Scot, unwilling to receive emoluments from a people, whose souls he could not edify, wrote to pope Clement III. desiring him to constitute Argyll a separate See, and to confer the bishopric on Evaldus his chaplain, who was well qualified for the purpose, and could speak Irish. "How," says he, "can I give a comfortable account to the Judge of the world at the last day, if I pretend to teach those, who cannot understand me? The revenues suffice for two bishops, if we are content with a competency, and are not prodigal of the patrimony of Christ. It is better to lessen the charge, and increase the number of labourers in the Lord's vineyard." His whole request was granted, but the erection appears not to have been made till the year 1300. Clement the Third died in 1191. Sentiments such as these, would have done honour to the purest ages. It seemed worth while to give some illustration to the opinion of the Waldenses, "who professed that there were pious men, who lived in Babylon;" and John Scot deserves to be regarded as a practical teacher of bishops and pastors in all ages.

Great Britain furnishes us with a similar instance. Seval, archbishop of York, wrote to pope Alexander IV. against his violent and oppressive conduct, and exhorted him to follow Peter,—to feed, not to devour, the sheep of Christ. The particular occasion of this letter was, that the pope had intruded a person named Jordan into the deanery of York.¹ The courage and integrity of Seval enraged the pope, who, on some pretence, excommunicated him: he still however persisted, and withstood the intrusion of unworthy clergymen. The Romanists harassed him with their utmost malevolence; but he was honoured by the people. He died in 1258, in the fourth year of his archbishopric, of which he seems to have kept possession till his decease.

Henry of Gaunt, archdeacon of Tournay, called "the famous teacher," wrote against ecclesiastical abusers: he maintained, that a prelate was subject to law, was no lord, and that evil became not good, because the pope commanded or permitted it.²

William de St. Amour, doctor of the Sorbonne, and professor of divinity in the university of Paris, was one of the greatest ornaments of Christianity, which appeared in the Roman communion in this century. He had his name from St. Amour in Franche Compté, the place of his nativity. The mendicant orders seldom met with a more vigorous and able adversary. The Dominicans in particular seemed desirous to engross all the power and influence of the university to themselves, while the doctors, resisting

their unjust encroachments, excluded them from their society. In the year 1255 the debate was brought before pope Alexander IV. who, with intolerable arrogance, ordered the university not only to restore the Dominicans to their former station, but also to grant them as many professorships, as they should require." Thus the friars not only intruded themselves into the dioceses and churches of the bishops and clergy, and, by the sale of indulgences and a variety of scandalous exactions, perverted whatever of good order and discipline remained in the Church, but also began to domineer over the seminaries of learning. And, in all this, as the pope was the principal leader, a despotism of the very worst nature was growing stronger and stronger in Christendom. The doctors of the university of Paris now loudly joined in the cry of the secular clergy against the invasions of the mendicants; and indeed the papal power at this time ruled with absolute dominion. No pastor of a Church could maintain any due authority over the laity, if a Franciscan or Dominican appeared in his parish, to sell indulgences, and to receive confessions; and the most learned body of men, at that time, in Europe, were now subject to the government of these agents of popedom. The magistrates of Paris, at first, were disposed to protect the university; but the terror of the papal edicts reduced them at length to silence; and not only the Dominicans, but also the Franciscans assumed whatever power they pleased in that famous seminary, and knew no other restrictions, except what the Roman tyrant imposed upon them.

The genius and spirit of St. Amour were remarkably distinguished in this controversy. He wrote several treatises against the mendicant orders, and particularly a book published in the year 1255, concerning the perils of the latter days. Persuaded as he was, that St. Paul's prophecy of the latter times³ was fulfilling in the abominations of the friars, he laid down thirty-nine marks of false teachers. He might have reduced them to a much smaller number; for, unavoidably, many of his marks will involve and imply one another. He exposes, however, with much discernment and perspicuity, the selfishness, hypocrisy, flattery, and sordid artifices of the friars: he particularly inveighs against their intrusion into the folds of other pastors, and their attempts to alienate the affections of the flock from their lawful teachers. An unworthy practice too common even in the best times of the Church!—and which, from the love of novelty and the instability so natural to mankind, has ever found but too

¹ In this brief account of St. Amour, I have endeavoured to give the substance of the information contained in the Centuriators, in Du Pin, Mosheim, and Fox's Martyrology.

² 2 Tim. iii. 1.

such encouragement! St. Amour takes notice of this sort of opposition, which St. Paul met with at Corinth, and shews, that it is the mark of a true pastor, not to be foud of building on another man's foundation, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.¹ This was to strike directly at the particular practices of the mendicants; who were also remarkably active in engaging the laity to enrich their orders, and omitted no methods to amplify their possessions. St. Amour, with a discernment remarkably keen for these times, explains our Saviour's precepts concerning the selling of what a man has, and the giving of it to the poor, shewing that the inward affection, and practical preference in all cases of competition, are the things, which Christ meant to inculcate, not the literally parting with all our property, of which generosity hypocrites boasted so much.

A few years before the unrighteous decision of the pope in favour of the friars, a fatematic book, under the title of "Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel," was published by a Franciscan, which, by exalting Francis above Jesus Christ, and arrogating to his order the glory of reforming mankind by a new Gospel substituted in the room of that of Christ, attempted to exalt that mendicant tribe to the height of divine estimation in the eyes of mankind. The universal ferment, excited by this impious book, obliged Alexander IV. to suppress it in the year 1255, and he ordered it to be burnt in secret, willing to spare the reputation of the mendicants. But the university of Paris, which, in the same year, received that grievous injury from the pontiff, which has been mentioned, insisted upon a public condemnation of the book, and Alexander, mighty as he was in power, was constrained, for once, to give way to the feelings of mankind; and he publicly committed the Franciscan's performance to the flames. The next year, however, he revenged himself on St. Amour, by ordering his book on the perils of the latter days to be also committed to the flames, and by banishing him out of France. The persecuted champion retired into Franche Comte, the place of his birth, but, under the pontificate of Clement IV. he returned to the metropolis, wrote against the abuses of popery with persevering ardour, and died esteemed and regretted by all in the Roman Church, who retained any regard for Christian truth and piety. This seems the substance of all that is known concerning this extraordinary personage, who only wanted a more favourable soil, in which he might bring to maturity the fruits of those protestant principles, the seeds of which he nourished in his breast.

John², de Poliacco, a disciple of St. Amour, trode in the steps of his master, and insisted on the rights of the parochial clergy to hear the confessions of the laity, and condemned the general license of discharging that function, which the pope gave to the mendicant orders. Both parties seem involved in the superstition of auricular confession; but the mendicants evidently transgressed the bounds of justice. It may, perhaps, be doubted, what was the real character of John: this, however, is certain,—He was condemned by papal authority in the year 1277.

Francis of Assisium, founder of the minor friars, was doubtless an extraordinary character. He was born at Assisium in the ecclesiastical state, and was disinherited by his father, who was disgusted at his enthusiasm. In 1209³ he founded his order, which was but too successful in the world. His practices of devotion were monstrous, and he seems ever to have been the prey of a whimsical imagination. Pride and deceit are not uncommonly connected with a temper like his, and he gave a memorable instance of both. It is certain that he was impressed with five wounds on his body, resembling the wounds of Christ crucified. It is certain also, that he pretended to have received the impression as a miraculous favour from heaven. To describe the particulars of such a story, would be to descend beneath the dignity of history. Let it suffice to have mentioned in general what is authentic, whence the reader may form some notion of the truth of St. Paul's prediction, concerning the man whose coming was to be after the working of Satan with lying wonders.⁴ The papacy indeed was full of such figments at this time. Francis sought for glory among men by his follies and absurdities, and he found the genius of the age so adapted to his own, that he gained immense admiration and applause. He died in 1226, in the forty-fifth year of his age.⁵ Posterity saw his order splendid in secular greatness, though under the masque of poverty; and we have⁶ already recounted the dreams of one of his disciples, who was no mean imitator of his master. The serious and intelligent follower of Jesus will not be staggered at such disgusting counterfeits of Christian virtue. He will recognize in them the hand of Satan, deluding with fictitious holiness men, who had despised that holiness, which was genuine. And thus they, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, were justly given over to diabolical infatuations.⁷ Nothing has happened but according to Scriptural revelation; and the duty of

¹ Magd. Cent. 13.

² Alban Butler.

³ 2 Thess. ii. 9.

⁴ Alban Butler, Vol. X.—Cave, Vol. I. page 704.

⁵ Viz. The author of "Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel," see the bottom of page 22.

⁶ 2 Thess. ii.

humbly and seriously attending to the divine oracles, as our true wisdom and felicity, is made evident.

Let us dwell a moment on his contemporary Dominic, the founder of the Dominicans. He was a Spaniard, born in the year 1170. In fictitious miracles and monstrous asperities he resembled Francis.⁷ We have seen how he laboured among the Waldenses. Butler observes, that he had no hand in the cruelties of the crusades, and asserts, that he was not connected with the inquisition; though he owns, that the project of this court was first formed in a counsel of Toulouse in 1229, and that in 1293, two Dominican friars were the first inquisitors. Let us exercise as much candour as possible on a subject very much controverted, and admit with a learned historian,* that Dominic was an inquisitor, but not in the most offensive sense of the word. Let it be remembered, however, that candour is due also to the Waldenses, whom the learned Roman Catholic, to whose industry I am repeatedly obliged, describes, from Le Gendre's history of France, as a combination of shocking banditti, and whom he accuses of holding the unlawfulness of oaths, and of putting men to death. These charges have been sufficiently confuted by what we have seen from their own memoirs.—The biographer, who found it so very easy to acquit Dominic, should not have condemned the Waldenses on such erroneous information.

Butler also commends the piety of Simon Montfort, the persecutor of the Albigenses, and the father of the famous malcontent earl of Leicester, who flourished in the reign of king Henry III.—And though he condemns the barbarities of the crusades, he represents the Waldenses as the enemies of public peace, and the laws of civil society. In this the learned author speaks against the concurrent testimony of the princes under whom they lived, and who owned them to be the best of subjects.

To return to Dominic. He seems to have shewn no one evidence of genuine humility, or of evangelical piety. In religious pride he lived; and, it is much to be feared, he died in the same temper and in the greatest ignorance. For in his last hours he promised his brethren, that he would never forget them, when he was gone to God. If persons, who inquire into the nature of true religion, examined with more precision the true marks of pride on the one hand, or of humility on the other, they would not be so easily imposed on by false pretensions.

The same Dominic constituted the rosary, or the psalter of the virgin Mary. To illustrate this subject, which, though egregiously trifling in its own nature, deserves

a few moments consideration, as tending to give a just view of the religious taste then in fashion, it is to be observed, that the old ascetics counted the number of their prayer by grains, or such like marks.⁸ Those, who could not read, nor recite the psalter by heart, supplied that deficiency by repeating the Lord's prayer. And thus illiterate persons, at canonical hours, performed devotions corresponding to those of the psalter recited by the clergy and others; and they were taught, no doubt, that their simple performances would be equally meritorious with the religious exercises of the more learned. On these principles paternosters were counted by the studs of the belts; and Peter the Hermit, famous for promoting the first crusades, instructed the illiterate laity to say a number of paternosters and ave mays in lieu of each canonical hour of the Church-offices. And thus, I imagine, he attempted to qualify his enthusiastic crusaders for the kingdom of heaven. But to Dominic the glory of completing this scheme of MECHANICAL devotion belongs. He directed men to recite fifteen decads of hail mary, &c. and one paternoster before each decad. These men were taught to repeat an hundred and fifty times the angel's salutation of the virgin, interlarded with a number of paternosters, and to believe that this practice would be as acceptable as the recital of the hundred and fifty psalms. I suppose very zealous devotees would go through all this work at one time: perhaps others, less laborious, might perform it at successive intervals.—But is this the spirit of GRACE and PURIFICATION⁹ promised to the Christian Church? Is this the spirit of adoption, whereby men say Abba Father? What is it but the spirit of bondage and miserable superstition, the religion of the lips, a self-righteous drudgery of so much devotional work, with a view to purchase the remission of sins, and to ease the consciences of men, who lived without either understanding the doctrines, or practising the precepts of Scripture? Observe hence, with how much propriety the Waldenses, as we have seen, taught men the true nature of prayer; and, what a dreadful vacuum of all true piety was now the portion of nominal Christians, who had departed from the grace of Christ Jesus!

So powerful, however, is the genuine operation of the Divine Spirit, that it can purify a humble soul by faith in Christ, and exhibit a brief assemblage of Christian virtues, even in the gulf of superstition. This seems to have been the case with a great personage of this century, whose character deserves particular illustration. This was Lewis IX. commonly called St. Lewis, the son of Lewis VIII. who invaded England

⁷ Butler, Vol. VIII.

⁸ Mosheim, Vol. 2. page 696.

⁹ Butler, Vol. X.

⁹ Zeck. xii. 10.

in the reign of king John. His mother Blanche brought him up with much religious care. "I love you, my son, said she, with all the tenderness of which a mother is capable; but, I would infinitely rather see you fall dead at my feet, than that you should commit a mortal sin." Lewis felt the daily impression of this thought on his mind. In his minority Blanche completed the reduction of the Albigenese, a dreadful work, which has already engaged our painful attention. How far Blanche herself might be imposed on by the slanders so copiously poured on the supposed heretic, it is not easy to say. As to Lewis, however, a misnot, it may fairly be presumed, that he understood not the merits of the cause. As he grew up, his devotional spirit appeared consistently strong and equally fervent. He often invited men of a religious character to his table; and, when some objected to him, that he spent too much time at his devotions, he answered, "If that time were spent in hunting and gaming, I should not be so rigorously called to account for the employment of my vacant hours." He lived a life of self-denial: he banished from the court all diversions prejudicial to morals. No man, who broke the rules of decorum in conversation, could find admission into his presence. He frequently retired for the purpose of secret prayer. So comprehensive were the powers of his understanding, and so well qualified was he to excel in a variety of employments, that he, personally, administered justice to his subjects, with the greatest attention and impartiality. The effect was long remembered after his decease; and, those who were dissatisfied with the judicial processes of their own times, with a sigh expressed their wish, that justice might be administered as in the days of St. Lewis. Those, who were guilty of blasphemy, were by his own order, marked on the lips, some say on the forehead, with a hot iron. A rich citizen of Paris was punished in this manner; and Lewis silenced the complaints of those, who murmured at his severity, by observing, that he would rather suffer punishment himself, than omit to inflict it on transgressors.

Uprightness and integrity have seldom more strongly marked the character of any prince, than they did that of Lewis. He suffered not the nobles to oppress their vassals; and the exercise of sovereign power was in his hands a blessing to mankind. A nobleman had hanged three children for hunting rabbits: Lewis having investigated the fact, condemned him to capital punishment: a rare instance of the love of justice breaking through the forms of aristocratical oppression, which at that time domineered through Europe! It was not to be supposed,

that the feudal lords would, without emotion, hear of a sentence so uncommon, pronounced on an offender of such rank. They earnestly interceded for the nobleman's life; and Lewis was so far prevailed on by the maxims of the times, as to spare the offender's life; but he deprived him of the greatest part of his estate.

Truth and sincerity seem to have pervaded the soul of Lewis. In all treaties and negotiations he was conscientiously exact; and foreign states frequently referred matters of dispute to his arbitration. In him it appeared, that wisdom and truth, sound policy and Christian sincerity, are not at variance in the nature of things. And whatever disadvantages he might seem to undergo by a generous and disinterested conduct, he found them to be amply compensated by the respect and veneration attached to his character, and the confidence reposed in his justice by all mankind.

With great pleasure I dwell a little on a character, so singularly excellent. An elegant historian⁴ observes, that "he united to the mean and abject superstition of a monk, the magnanimity of the hero, the integrity of the patriot, and the humanity of the philosopher."—So cautiously does he abstain from praising Christianity, even while he gives a warm encomium to a most upright Christian! All the notice, which he designs to give of his religious principles, is an insinuation, that they were mere monasticism. I confess, the superstition of the times had deeply tintured Lewis; and it is to be regretted, that his eminent station gave him not that access to the protestants of his own dominions, who at that time adorned the real Gospel of Christ, which might, under God, have emancipated his soul from papal bondage, and enabled him to shine with a salutary light among the very best of Christian princes. Disadvantageously situated as he was, he could only acquire and maintain the spirit of a Christian for himself: the whole tenour of his life demonstrated the sincerity of his Christian faith, and love: but, enslaved by papal domination, he could not emancipate his subjects. It is certain, however, that mere superstition could never have exhibited so steady and consistent a piety as that of Lewis; and it seems no less so, that mere philosophy, in whatever sense we may suppose the historian to have used that vague and ill-defined term, was equally incompetent to produce such a character as that of this prince. It was the Christian, the man of faith, of humility, and of prayer, which exhibited the personage before us. Let us attend a little to the FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, which sprang from Christian principles in this monarch; for the course of our history

gives us very seldom an opportunity of illustrating the power of the Gospel in national and political transactions.

The weak and distracted government of our king Henry III. gave to Lewis frequent occasions of exercising that secular chicanery, and that spirit of artful intrigue, in which mere statesmen abound. The English were divided among themselves, and Henry held the balance of power among them with a tremulous hand. But Lewis took no advantage of their divisions, nor attempted to expel them from their provinces, which they still held in France. John, the father of Henry, had by a sentence of attainder, seconded by the arms of Philip Augustus, the grandfather of Lewis, been deprived of Normandy, and some other provinces in France. Lewis had scruples of conscience, which affected his mind, in regard to the detention of those provinces, which had fallen to him by way of inheritance. He even expressed some intention of restoring them, and was only prevented by reflecting on the justice of punishing John, as a felon and a murderer, who had barbarously slain his nephew prince Arthur.—He never interposed in English affairs, but with an intention to compose the differences between the king and his nobility; he recommended every healing measure to both parties; and he exerted himself with all his might, to bring to a sense of his duty, the earl of Leicester, that same enterprising rebel, who, after a series of splendid crimes, was at last defeated and slain by Edward prince of Wales, the son of king Henry. He made a treaty with England, at a time when the affairs of the kingdom were at the lowest ebb: but, he took no advantage of his own superior situation in the terms of the treaty. He made some liberal concessions: he ensured to Henry the peaceable possession of Guienne; and only required him to cede Normandy, and his other provinces, which he had no prospect of ever regaining. Afterwards, when by a rare instance of confidence, the king of England and his barons agreed to refer the settlement of their differences to Lewis, that equitable monarch decided in a manner, which shewed his equal regard to the prerogatives of the crown and the rights of the people.

In his days, Gengis Kan, the Tartar, threatened to deluge Europe by his victorious arms. The consternation was general: but, Lewis said to his mother, "What have we to fear? we shall either live conquerors, or die martyrs."

The spirit of the crusades was adapted to the superstitious habits of Lewis, and he fell into the snare. From this quarter alone he, who in other respects was the father and friend of his people, was unhappily led into a conduct prejudicial to society. Having been brought to the brink of the grave by

an illness in 1244, when he was beginning to recover he took the vow of the cross; and, as soon as he was able, raised an army and made an expedition into the Holy Land. Before his departure, he took care to make large restitution for injuries inadvertently committed throughout the kingdom: he took the most exact care of the morals of his soldiers, so far as he had opportunity and ability; and, in the whole course of his military measures, avoided the unnecessary effusion of blood by saving the life of every infidel, whom he could take prisoner. It is a deplorable instance of the power of the "god of this world" over our fallen race, that a monarch of so much good sense, and of so great virtue and piety, could yet be engaged in a cause so imprudent and chimerical. Good men, however, will act a consistent part, even where they are evidently mistaken in their object. Lewis was still the same man; and the fear of God was his predominant principle of action. Let civil history relate his military prowess, the efforts of his prodigious valour, and the series of his calamities. When he was taken prisoner by the Saracens, and was menaced with death, he behaved with his usual fortitude, and concern for his soldiers. At length being ransomed, he visited Palestine. Hearing of the death of his mother Blanche, he discovered much filial tenderness on the occasion. As he returned to Europe after a disastrous expedition, three sermons were preached every week on board his ship; and the sailors and soldiers were catechized and instructed, Lewis bearing a part in all the religious offices. He returned to Paris after an absence of almost six years. Here he was visited by our Henry VII. to whom he said, "I think myself more happy, that God hath given me patience in suffering, than if I had conquered the world." We are told, that many Saracens, induced by his piety, received Christian baptism; and that he sent two monks to preach to the Tartars;—but the vices of Christians were so flagrant, as to defeat all these good intentions.

Devoted as Lewis was to the popedom, he could not but see the enormous ecclesiastical abuses, which at that time prevailed. He, therefore, made laws against papal encroachments, and against simony; and prohibited the rapines of the Roman pontiff by an edict, in which he expresses himself to this effect; "the exactions and heavy impositions of money, imposed on our kingdom by the court of Rome, through which our territories are miserably impoverished, we will not suffer to be collected." Words were no empty sounds with a prince of his steadiness and fortitude; and, by the vigour and wisdom of his administration, France seems to have been much

exempted from that intolerable oppression of the Roman tyrant, under which England at that time groaned. But Lewis undertook a second crusade, laid siege to Tunis on the coast of Africa, and died before that city.—On the approach of death he gave very salutary advice to Philip his eldest son. “Avoid wars,” says he, “with Christians, and spare the innocent subjects of your enemy. Discountenance blasphemy, games of chance, drunkenness, and impurity. Lay no heavy burdens on your subjects. I pray our Lord Jesus Christ to strengthen you in his service, and always to increase his grace in you; and I beg that we may together see, praise and honour him to eternity. Suffer patiently; being persuaded that you deserve much more punishment for your sins; and then tribulation will be your gain. Love and converse with the godly: banish the vicious from your company: delight to hear profitable sermons: wherever you are, permit none, in your presence, to deal in slanderous or indecent conversation. Hear the poor with patience: and, where your own interest is concerned, stand for your adversary against yourself, till the truth appear.” As Lewis grew more feeble, he desired no mention whatever to be made to him of temporal things; and scarce spake at all, except to his confessor. He prayed with tears for the conversion of infidels and sinners; and besought God, that his army might have a safe retreat, lest through weakness of the flesh, they should deny Christ. He repeated aloud, “Lord, I will enter into thine house; I will worship in thy holy temple, and give glory to thy name. Into thine hands I commend my spirit.” These were his last words; and he breathed out his soul in the year 1270, aged fifty-five years. In better times, and with clearer evangelical light, what might not have been expected from such a character? We have seen the most abject superstition combined with the most dignified uprightness. We have seen Christianity, degenerated indeed and disgraced with superstition, but still amiable and fruitful in good works; and in such good works, as no man of mere secular wisdom could ever pretend to. The name and fundamental truths of Jesus, to a mind like his, humble and contrite through divine influence, exhibited a rare assemblage of virtues. And one may ask the most bigoted admirer of modern French philosophy and republicanism, to shew a single person, who has taken an active part in the late revolutions of that infatuated nation, that can at all be compared to Lewis IX. in sincerity, philanthropy, and modesty.

This century saw also a pope, who will deserve to be commemorated in the annals of the Church of Christ. Peter Celestine

was^a born in Apulia, about the year 1221, and lived as a hermit in a little cell. He was admitted into holy orders; but after that, he lived five years in a cave on Mount Morroni near Sulmona. He was molested with internal temptations, which his confessor told him were a stratagem of the enemy, that would not hurt him; if he despised it. He founded a monastery at Mount Morroni, in 1274. The See of Rome, having been vacant two years and three months, Celestine was unanimously chosen pope on account of the fame of his sanctity. The archbishop of Lyons,^b presenting him with the instrument of his election, conjured him to submit to the vocation. Peter, in astonishment, prostrated himself on the ground; and, after he had continued in prayer a considerable time, he rose up, and, fearing to oppose the will of God, he consented to his election, and took the name of Celestine V.

Since the days of the first Gregory, no pope had ever assumed the pontifical dignity with more purity of intention. But he had not Gregory's talents for business and government; and the Roman See was immensely more corrupt in the thirteenth than it was in the sixth century.—Celestine soon became sensible of his incapacity: he was lost, as in a wilderness. He attempted to reform abuses, to retrench the luxury of the clergy, to do, in short, what he found totally impracticable. He committed mistakes and exposed himself to the ridicule of the scornful. His conscience was kept on the rack through a variety of scruples, from which he could not extricate himself; and, from his ignorance of the world, and of canon-law, he began to think he had done wrong in accepting the office. He spent much of his time in retirement: nor was he easy there, because his conscience told him, that he ought to be discharging the pastoral office. Overcome with anxiety, he asked cardinal Cajetan, whether he might not abdicate? It was answered, yes. Celestine gladly embraced the opportunity of assuming again the character of brother Peter, after he had been distressed with the phantom of dignity for four or five months. He abdicated in 1294. The last act of his pontificate was worthy of the sincerity of his character. He made a constitution, that the pontiff might be allowed to abdicate, if he pleased.—It is remarkable, that no pope has, since that time, taken the benefit of this constitution.

That same Cajetan, who had encouraged his resignation, contrived to be elected his successor, and took the name of Boniface VIII. Though Peter had given the most undoubted proofs of his love of obscurity,

^a Butler, Vol. V.

^b Vortoe's Knights of Malta, Vol. II. [†] Platina.

and desired nothing more than that he might spend the rest of his days in private devotion, yet Boniface, who measured other men by himself, apprehended and imprisoned him, lest he should revoke his resignation. Peter gave such proofs of sincerity, as convinced all persons, except Boniface himself, that nothing was to be dreaded from his ambition. The tyrant sent him into the castle of Fumone, under a guard of soldiers: the old hermit was shut up in a hideous dungeon; and his rest was interrupted by the jailors, who nightly disturbed his sleep. These insults and hardships he seems to have borne with Christian patience and meekness. He sent this message to Boniface, "I am content; I desired a cell, and a cell you have given me." But AMBITION IS MADE OF STERNER STUFF, than to yield to the suggestions of conscience or humanity. In the year 1296, after an imprisonment of ten months, Celestine died of a fever, most probably contracted by the unworthy treatment which he received.

I have now mentioned the principal facts recorded concerning Celestine. There are no memorials of the internal exercises of his mind, but the discerning reader will be apt to rank him with those of whom "the world was not worthy." After his decease, the hypocritical Boniface, and all the cardinals, attended his obsequies at St. Peter's. This is that Boniface, whose crimes disgraced the end of this century, and the beginning of the next: of whom it is said, that he entered the pontificate as a fox, lived as a lion, and died as a dog: and who, having tormented the Christian world for eight years, met at length with a punishment worthy of his crimes, dying in prison under the greatest agonies. This same man also published a decretal, "that the Roman pontiff ought to be judged by none, though, by his conduct, he drew innumerable souls with himself to hell!"

Thomas Aquinas, called the angelical doctor, filled the Christian world in this century with the renown of his name. He was a Dominican, who, by his comments on four books of Peter Lombard, master of the sentences, and, particularly, by his expositions of Aristotle, made himself more famous than most men of that time, on account of his skill in scholastic divinity. His penetration and genius were of the first order; but he excelled in that subtle and abstruse kind of learning only, which was better calculated to strike the imagination, than to improve the understanding. He maintained what is commonly called the doctrine of free-will, though he largely quoted Augustine, and retailed many of his pious and devotional sentiments. His Aristotelian subtilities enabled him to give a specious colour to the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, which in him found a

vehement defender. The new festival of the body of Christ was, by this divine, adorned with an idolatrous ritual, which strengthened the fashionable superstitions.¹ He was the great supporter of the doctrine of supererogation, which, at the same time that it established the most pernicious views of self-righteousness, by leaving the disposal of the superfluous treasure of the merits of saints to the discretion of the papal See, added one strong link to the chain, which dragged the nations into ecclesiastical slavery. Nor were his voluminous writings much calculated to instruct mankind. For he supposed, that whatever sense any passage of scripture would, possibly, admit in grammatical construction, it was the real sense intended by the Holy Spirit: whence the imaginations of every sportive genius were regarded as of divine authority. And thus the scriptures were perverted and exposed to the ridicule of profane minds. Nor were they rescued from this miserable abuse, till the era of the Reformation. His sentiments on the all-important doctrine of justification, were deplorably corrupt; and that "good works deserve grace of congruity," was one of his favorite axioms. His notions of the nature of repentance were egregiously trifling. On the other hand, there are in his writings, and particularly in the account of his discourses during his last sickness, traces of great devotion, and a strain of piety very similar to that of Augustine. But I confess, that, interlarded as they are with Romish idolatry, and an unbounded attachment to the pope as the infallible guide of the church, I feel no inclination to transcribe them; because I am thoroughly convinced of the frauds by which the Dominicans supported the popedom; and because some glare of solemn devotion seemed necessary to be employed by the agents of that See, in order to maintain the reputation of a system intolerably corrupt.

Bonaventura, a Franciscan doctor, may be briefly dismissed with similar observations. He also held the same corrupt sentiments, concerning justification, with Thomas Aquinas. Nor does there appear in the whole Roman Church, in this century, a single divine, who could give to a serious inquirer the scriptural answer to the question, "what shall I do to be saved?" Hence all, who felt trouble of conscience, were led to betake themselves to salvos with which the blind leaders of the blind supplied them.—Among these the delusive invention of purgatory was the most remarkable; and in the Romish Church it upholds its credit to this day. Be-

¹ I have consulted the Centuriators, Mosheim, De Pin, and Butler, concerning the tenets and writings of this Doctor, and, on the whole, can find but little matter, which may properly belong to this history.—A similar observation may be made concerning Bonaventura.
² See Article XIII. of the Church of England.
³ Acts xvi. 30, 31.

² Heb. xi. 38.

fore the true scripture-doctrine of justification it cannot stand for a moment; and whoever applies this doctrine with unfeigned faith to a guilty conscience, such an one will find relief, and will be led into the paths of true peace and genuine holiness. He may indeed and ought to pity those, who are deluded by so unscriptural and superstitious a notion as that of purgatory, but he himself will never be led captive by it.—It may be worth while to state the reasons on which the advocates of the papacy support the doctrine of purgatory in their own words.—“Some part of the debt, which the penitent owes to the divine justice, may remain uncanceled.—Certainly some sins are venial, which deserve not eternal death; yet, if not effaced by condign penance in this world, they must be punished in the next.—The smallest sin excludes a soul from heaven, so long as it is not blotted out. But no man will say, that a venial sin, which destroys not sanctifying grace, will be punished with eternal torments. Hence there must be a relaxation of some sin in the world to come.—Venial sins of surprise are readily effaced by penance, as we hope, through the divine mercy. Venial sins of malice, are those committed with full deliberation, are of a different nature, far more grievous and fatal. They are usually sins of habit, and lead even to mortal sin.”

Thus, by the help of certain distinctions of sins, conclusions no where warranted in scripture were drawn, and mankind were led to look on purgatory as a relief to troubled consciences. If they had not effaced their guilt by penance in this life, it was hoped that purgatory, assisted by the prayers and donations made in behalf of the deceased, would release them afterwards from damnation. How strongly men were hence encouraged to live in sin all their days, is but too plain. And it seems wonderful, that so learned and sensible an author as A. Butler should build a doctrine of such practical importance on mere conjectures without the least scriptural ground. But on the other hand, whoever sees the real guilt and defilement of sin, of all sorts of sin, and rests wholly and entirely for acceptance with God on the righteousness, atonement, and intercession of Jesus Christ, finds at once the power of superstition and of licentiousness subdued; and he knows how to possess his soul in PERFECT PEACE; and to serve his heavenly Father “without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of his life.” The instruction, which lays open this secret, is given by every real protestant teacher of divinity; instruction,—which, we see, the two great admired doctors and supposed luminaries of the thirteenth century were unable to give.

It is much to be wished that we could know more of Hugo the Burgundian, a Roman cardinal, who wrote comments on the whole scriptures, and honestly exposed the impiety and wickedness of the ecclesiastics of his time. He died at Rome, in the year 1262.⁴

Guilhelmus, bishop of Paris, flourished about the year 1230. On Christian justification, and other fundamentals, he thought more justly than many of his contemporaries. He wrote on various religious subjects, and particularly on the collation of benefices; on which point he held, that no man could be a pluralist, without the loss of his soul, unless the value of his preferments was exceedingly small. He was a man of learning and piety.

On this question the care of the ancient Church had been remarkable. In the fourth general council of Chalcedon, by the tenth canon, pluralities were condemned: also at the second council of Nice, in the eighth century. In the sixth council of Paris, held in the year 829, the same practice was pronounced unlawful. And so strongly did the voice of natural conscience, and the common sense of propriety and decorum prevail against the torrent of fashionable corruptions, in speculation at least, that even in the twelfth and thirteen centuries, the possession of scandalous pluralities was condemned in a papal council, namely, the fourth council of the Lateran.⁵

Christianus, bishop of Mentz, was accused before the pope as a person incapable of governing the Church. For he had refused to be concerned in military and secular employments, and had given himself up to the pastoral care. In these times such a conduct was deemed contemptible at least, if not criminal: after two years residence at Mentz he resigned; and, not long after, he died in the year 1251.⁶

CHAPTER VII.

GROSSETESTE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

ROBERT⁷ GROSSETESTE was born probably about the year 1175: he seems to have been a person of obscure parentage at Stradbrook in Suffolk. He studied at Oxford, where learning was very zealously cultivated: and there he laid the foundation of his skill in the Greek tongue, the knowledge of which had been introduced from France and Italy. Hence he made himself master of Aristotle,

⁴ See Burnet's Pastoral Care. ⁵ Ibid. 423.

⁶ Cent. Magd. 483.

⁷ Id. Cent. Magd.

⁸ I am obliged principally to Mr. Pegg's late valuable publication of the life of this distinguished prelate for the following account; but I have also consulted Fox the Martyrologist and other authors.

whose works, though idolized, had hitherto been only read through the medium of translation: and at Oxford also he studied the sacred language of the Old Testament. He afterwards went to Paris, the most renowned seminary then in Europe, where he still prosecuted the study of the Hebrew and the Greek, and became a perfect master of the French language. Here also he became, according to the ideas of the age, a consummate theologian and philosopher. Knowledge was then very rude and inaccurate; but Grosseteste, doubtless, possessed all which Europe could furnish. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that he should have been looked on as a magician: the same thing happened to the famous Roger Bacon, who flourished something later.

Grosseteste, was a divine of principal note in the university of Oxford. He associated with both the mendicant orders, and was the first lecturer in the Franciscan school of that seminary. He seems to have been always serious in religion according to the degree of light which he had: and, as his views were very indistinct, it is not surprising, that he was, for a time at least, captivated by the appearance of sanctity in those deceivers of mankind.

In the year 1235, he was elected, by the dean and chapter, bishop of Lincoln; and king Henry III. confirmed their choice. That See was then much more extensive than it is at this day: and the new bishop, who was of an ardent and active spirit, immediately undertook to reform abuses. For this end he usually went through the several archdeacons and deaneries, requiring the attendance of the clergy, and admonishing the people likewise to attend, that their children might be confirmed, that they might make their confession, and hear the word of God. Robert himself usually preached to the clergy; and some friar of the Dominican or Franciscan order lectured the people. The friars of these orders were now his particular favourites; and he encouraged them to hear the confessions of the laity, and to enjoin them penance. The secular clergy were naturally enough offended at this predilection of the bishop: they thought that their own rights were invaded. In the mean time the friars themselves gradually brought the new orders into disrepute by exercising an unlimited dominion over the consciences of the laity, and by enriching themselves at their expense. But Robert, who measured the minds of others by his own honesty and simplicity, and who was pleased with the superior learning, zeal, and activity of these new instruments of the papacy saw not as yet the evil tendency of their measures, and, therefore, he encouraged their labours. The days were evil: the zealous bishop could not think of giving countenance to the secular

clergy who were ignorant and vicious, in preference to the friars: and, in his zeal for promoting godliness, of which his notions were confused and indigested, he was glad of those assistants, who seemed most cheerfully to co-operate with his own benevolent intentions.

But though he was far more disposed to favour the two new orders than they deserved, he was severe in his censures of the other more ancient orders, and was very strict in his visitations of them. In both parts of his conduct he was influenced by the same upright principle: the hypocrisy indeed of the Dominicans and Franciscans escaped his penetration; but he could not be deceived by the gross ignorance and dissolute manners of the more ancient orders. Such were the methods by which the prince of darkness seems to have prolonged the reign of Antichrist. The orders of ancient times, having filled up their season in supporting the MAN OF SIN by a specious appearance of holiness, when this was gone, other orders arose, who undertook the same task, and defended the system of iniquity by a severer course of life and manners. Even such men as the bishop of Lincoln, rigidly conscientious and upright, were seduced, undesignedly, to lend their aid in imposing on mankind. In the mean time, the true cure of these evils, namely, the light of scripture and of its genuine doctrines, was generally unknown in Christendom.

One of the most salutary offices of the art of criticism is to distinguish the genuine works of the ancients from the spurious. This was unknown in Grosseteste's time: and hence the laborious bishop was induced to employ his learning in translating "the Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs" out of Greek into Latin. He thought that he had, by this means, enriched Europe with a valuable monument of sacred antiquity. It is amazing, that the bishop should place so contemptible a performance on an equal footing with the Holy Scriptures. It scarcely seemed worth while to mention such a circumstance, except as a demonstration that the ignorance of the times was exceedingly great, and that the difficulties of acquiring divine knowledge were then immense beyond our conception.

Let it suffice to mention in general, that the bishop of Lincoln was, partly through his love of justice, and partly through the excessive warmth of his temper, frequently engaged in quarrels with convents, and with other agents of the pope. At one time he was even excommunicated by the convent of Canterbury: but this ecclesiastical sentence was so frequently prostituted to the basest purposes, and was so often pronounced on frivolous occasions, that it had, in a great measure, lost its influence on the minds of men. Grosseteste treated it in his own

case, with scorn and contempt, and continued to labour in the promotion of piety, and in the redress of abuses, with unwearied vigour and activity, but, at the same time, under all the disadvantages, which the darkness of the times and an eager and vehement temper may be supposed to occasion. So long a course of consistent steadiness, integrity, and so much fear of God, attended with so small a degree of spiritual light, as in the case of this bishop, is not a common phenomenon in the Church of God. But the work of the Holy Spirit in religion is diversified with an endless variety of operations. The instance before us deserves attention. The holy soul of Robert Grosseteste, which was favoured with so much discernment, as just to understand and receive the essentials of godliness, and no more, could not endure with patience the manifold corruptions of the times. He took pains in his diocese to reform various gross abuses, among which was the practice of clergymen acting plays, and maintaining connection with Jews. The friars were still his favourites : and he rebuked the rectors and vicars of his diocese, because they neglected to hear them preach, and because they discouraged the people from attending and confessing to them. His devoted attachment to the popedom appears hence in a striking light, and still more so in some of their transactions which it is not necessary to particularize. He continued to patronize the friars. These were his most intimate companions : with these he used to hold conferences on the scriptures ; and at one time he had thoughts of entering into the Franciscan order himself. But however defective he was in doctrine, he was exceedingly strict in his views of morality : and, like all reformers of the merely active class, who labour to promote external good conduct, with low and inadequate ideas of Christian principle, he excited great offence and disgust, and produced very little solid benefit to mankind.

Events, however, occurred, which in some measure unfolded to the eyes of the bishop the real character of the friars. In 1247, two English Franciscans were sent into England with credentials to extort money for the pope. They applied to the prelates and abbots, but seem, at this time at least, to have met with little success. Grosseteste was amazed at the insolence and pompous appearance of the friars, who assured him that they had the pope's bull, and who earnestly demanded six thousand marks for the contribution of the diocese of Lincoln ; " Friars, answered he, with all reverence to his holiness be it spoken, the demand is as dishonourable, as it is impracticable. The whole body of the clergy and people are concerned in it equally with me. For me then

to give a definitive answer in an instant to such a demand, before the sense of the kingdom is taken upon it, would be rash and absurd." The native good sense of the bishop suggested this answer ; but the true Antichristian character of the pope was as yet unknown to Grosseteste.—The blood of our Saviour was about the same time pretended to be brought into England, and he had the weakness to vindicate the delusion.

The bishop continued still to exert himself with the most upright intentions for the good of the Church. But, it was his usual infelicity to " labour in the fire for very vanity," because he had no distinct perception of the fundamental truths of Christianity. The value of solid and perspicuous views of evangelical truth was never more forcibly exhibited than in his case. Most bishops or pastors, who have been possessed of this advantage, though inferior to Grosseteste in magnanimity, industry, and activity, have yet, if truly pious, far exceeded him in promoting the real good of the Church. He translated the works of John Damascenus, and of the spurious Dionysius the Areopagite, and illustrated them with commentaries ; the former author was learned indeed, but was the great patron of image-worship ; and the latter was a contemptible visionary.

It was in the case of practical evils, not of doctrinal errors, that the bishop of Lincoln showed the strength of his discernment : In regard to these he never failed to act with sincerity and vigour. In 1248, he obtained, at a great expense, from Innocent IV. letters to empower him to reform the religious orders. If he had understood at that time the real character of Antichrist, he would have foreseen the vanity of all attempts to reform the Church, which were grounded on papal authority. The rectitude, however, of his own mind was strikingly apparent in the transaction. He saw with grief the waste of large revenues made by the monastic orders ; and being supported by the pope, as he thought, he determined to take into his own hand the rents of the religious houses, most probably with a design to institute and ordain vicarages in his diocese, and to provide for the more general instruction of the people. But the monks appealed to the pope ; and Grosseteste, in his old age, was obliged to travel to Lyons, where Innocent resided. Roman venality was now at its height, and the pope determined the cause against the bishop. Grieved and astonished at so unexpected a decision, Grosseteste said to Innocent, " I relied on your letters and promises, but am entirely disappointed." What is that to you, answered the pope, you have done your part, and we are disposed to favour them : IS YOUR EYE EVIL, BECAUSE I AM GOOD ?

With such shameless effrontery can wicked men trifle with scriptural passages. The bishop, in a low tone, but so as to be heard, said with indignation, O money, how great is thy power, especially at the court of Rome! The remark was bold and indignant, but perfectly just. It behoved Innocent to give some answer; and he used the common method of wicked men in such cases, namely, to retort the accusation. "You English, said he, are always grinding and impoverishing one another. How many religious men, persons of prayer and hospitality, are you striving to depress, that you may sacrifice to your own tyranny and avarice!"—So spake the most unprincipled of robbers to a bishop, whose unspotted integrity was allowed by all the world.

All that the bishop could do was to leave his testimony at the court of Rome; and he delivered three copies of a long sermon, one copy to the pope, the other two copies to two of the cardinals. In this discourse he sharply inveighed against the flagitious practices of the court of Rome, particularly the appropriation of churches to religious houses, the appeals of the religious to the pope, and the scandalous clause in the bulls of *NON OBSTANTE*, which was the great engine of the pope's dispensing power. He observes, that the Son of God submitted to a most ignominious death for the redemption of human souls, which, without, mercy were delivered to wolves and bears. His uprightness and magnanimity were evidenced by this step, but no good effect appeared. To have explained and enforced the doctrines of the Gospel itself, and to have proved the whole structure of the papacy to have been perfectly inconsistent with those doctrines, would have been a far more likely method of promoting the edification of the Church; but to this task the light and knowledge of the bishop were unequal. He was for sometime so dejected with the disappointment which he had met with, that he formed intentions of resigning his bishopric. But, recollecting what ravages of the Church might be the consequence of such a step, he felt it his duty to remain in his office, and to do all the good, which the infelicity of the times would permit.

The bishop often preached to the people in the course of his perambulation through his diocese; and he required the neighbouring clergy to attend the sermons. He earnestly exhorted them to be laborious in ministering to their flocks; and the lazy Italians, who, by virtue of the pope's letters had been intruded into opulent benefices, and who neither understood the language of the people, nor wished to instruct them, were the objects of his detestation. He would often with indignation cast the papal bulls out of his hands, and absolutely refuse to comply with

them, saying, that he should be the friend of Satan, if he should commit the care of souls to foreigners. INNOCENT, however, persisting in his plan, preremptorily ordered him to admit an Italian, perfectly ignorant of the English language, to a very rich benefice in the diocese of Lincoln; and Grosseteste, refusing to obey, was suspended. Whether the sentence of suspension was formally repealed, or not, does not appear. Certain it is, that the bishop continued to exercise his episcopal functions; and shortly we shall advert to facts, which prove in a still more striking manner, with what impunity he despised the papal mandates.

Observing that churches appropriated to religious houses had not always stated vicars, and that where vicarages existed, they were often meanly endowed, he obtained at length in 1250, a bull from Innocent to empower him to regulate these matters. The evil was indeed enormous; but the persevering zeal of the bishop, supported by the extensive influence of his character, prevailed at length in some degree over the pope's usurpations; and a considerable number of vicarages in his diocese were at length regulated. — A pious and upright perseverance in the reformation of abuses, amidst many vexatious disappointments, is seldom altogether in vain; and this wise and encouraging order of the divine government is extremely worthy of the attention of dignitaries of the church in all ages.

Grosseteste united the labours of his pen to those of the episcopal office. He began a comment on the psalter, though he lived not to finish the work; and he seems to have known no other recreation, than what naturally arose from the variety of his religious employments.

In January 1253, Innocent was desirous of preferring his nephew, an Italian youth, in the cathedral of Lincoln; and for this purpose, he, by letter, directed the bishop of the diocese to give him the first canonry that should be vacant. This was to be done by *PROVISION*; for that was the decent term employed by the pontiff when he undertook to provide a successor to a benefice before hand, under pretence of correcting the abuse of long vacancies. INNOCENT seems to have been determined in this instance to intimidate the bishop into submission. He declared, that any other disposal of the canonry should be null and void; and that he would excommunicate every one, who should dare to disobey his injunction. He wrote to two Italians, his agents in England, ordering them to ensure and complete the appointment, with his usual clause of *NON OBSTANTE*; a clause pregnant with the most intolerable abuses; for it set aside all statutes and customs, and obliged them to give way to the present humour of the pope.

Grosseteste, resolute in his disobedience, wrote an *EPISTLE* on this occasion, which has made his name immortal. As he advanced in years, he saw more clearly the corruptions of the popedom, which, however, he still looked on as of divine authority. But if we set aside this remnant of the prejudices of education, he argues altogether on protestant principles. Some extracts of the epistle may deserve the reader's attention.* "I am not disobedient to the apostolical precepts.—I am bound by the divine command to obey these. Our Saviour Christ saith, whosoever is not with me, is against me.—Our lord the pope appears to be his type and representative. It is impossible then that the sanctity of the apostolical See can be repugnant to the authority of Jesus Christ. The *NON OBSTANTE* clause overflows with uncertainty, fraud, and deceit, and strikes at the root of all confidence between man and man. Next to the sin of Antichrist, which shall be in the latter time, nothing can be more contrary to the doctrine of Christ, than to destroy men's souls, by defrauding them of the benefit of the pastoral office. Those, who serve their own carnal desires by means of the milk and pool of the sheep of Christ, and do not minister the pastoral office to the salvation of the flock, are guilty of destroying souls. Two enormous evils are in this way committed. In one respect they sin directly against God himself, who is essentially good; in another against the image of God in man, which, by the reception of grace, is partaker of the divine nature.—For the holy apostolical See to be accessory to so great wickedness, would be a horrible abuse of the fulness of power, an entire separation from the glorious kingdom of Christ, and a proximity to the two princes of darkness.† No man, faithful to the said See, can, with an unspotted conscience, obey such mandates, even if they were seconded by the high order of angels themselves; on the contrary, every faithful Christian ought to oppose them with all his might. It is therefore in perfect consistence with my duty of obedience, that I withstand these enormities, so abominable to the Lord Jesus Christ, so repugnant to the holiness of the apostolical See, and so contrary to the unity of the Catholic faith. I say then, this See cannot act but to edification; but your *PROVISIONS* are to destruction. The holy See neither can nor ought to attempt any such thing; for flesh and blood, and not the Heavenly Father, hath revealed such doctrines."

It is not clear whether this epistle was written to the pope directly, or to some of his agents. It was meant, however, for his inspection; and it affords a marvellous instance of that Christian boldness and honest-

ty for which Grosseteste is so justly renowned.—Sullied, indeed, were the qualities of this good man with much doctrinal imbecility, but ever animated by a true zeal for the honour of God, and by the deepest sense of the worth of souls.

Innocent, on receiving the positive denial, accompanied with such warm remonstrances, was incensed beyond measure: and "Who, said he, is this old dotard, who dares to judge my actions? By Peter and Paul, if I were not restrained by my generosity, I would make him an example and a spectacle to all mankind. Is not the king of England my vassal, and my slave? and, if I gave the word, would he not throw him into prison, and load him with infamy and disgrace?" In so low a light did the bishop of Rome behold the monarch of this island! But king John had reduced his kingdom into a state of subjection to the pope; and the same vassalage continued all the days of his pusillanimous successor. The cardinals, however, who saw the danger which the pope incurred by his arrogance and temerity, endeavoured to moderate his resentment. Giles in particular, a Spanish cardinal, said, "It is not expedient for you to proceed against the bishop in that violent manner. For what he saith is certainly true, nor can we with decency condemn him. He is an holy man, more so than we ourselves are; a man of excellent genius, and of the best morals; no prelate in Christendom is thought to excel him. By this time, it is possible, that the truths expressed in his epistle are divulged among many; and they will stir up numbers against us. The clergy both of France and England know the character of the man, nor is it possible to cast any stigma upon him. He is believed to be a great philosopher, an accomplished scholar in Latin and Greek literature, zealous in the administration of justice, a reader of theology in the schools, a popular preacher, a lover of chastity, and an enemy of simony." Others joined with Giles in the same sentiments. On the whole, the cardinals advised the pope to connive at these transactions, lest some tumult might arise in the Church, for they said, it was an evident truth, that a revolt from the Church of Rome would one day take place in Christendom. It seems there were even then some discerning spirits, who could foresee, that so unrighteous a domination would in time be brought to a close. Yet the prevalence of ambition and avarice induced them to support that domination, though they were convinced of its iniquity.

But the fury of Innocent was not to be allayed. He pronounced the sentence of excommunication against Grosseteste; and nominated Albert, one of his nuncios, to the bishopric of Lincoln. The bishop appealed

* See Fox, Vol. I. p. 365, and M. Paris, p. 670.
† He seems to mean the Devil and Antichrist.

* Fox, Vol. I. p. 366. Page, p. 245.

to the tribunal of Christ, and paid no regard to the decree. What the cardinals foresaw, came to pass; the pope's commands were universally neglected; and the bishop continued in quiet possession of his dignity.

In the latter end of the summer of the same year 1253, he was seized with a mortal disease at his palace of Buckden; and he sent for friar John de St. Giles, to converse with him on the state of the Church. He blamed Giles and his brethren the Dominicans, and also the Franciscans, because, though their orders were founded in voluntary poverty, they did not rebuke the vices of the great. "I am convinced, said he, that both the pope, unless he amend his errors, and the friars, except they endeavour to restrain him, will be deservedly exposed to everlasting death." We may hence collect what was the foundation of that respect which the bishop was wont to pay to the friars; it was the éclat of their voluntary poverty, which he hoped would have enabled them to be faithful dispensers of the word of God, as by it they seemed to be removed above the temptations of avarice. If a man of his understanding was deceived by their feigned sanctity, it ought to be less matter of surprise that the world at large was imposed on by the same cause; and that the institution of these orders proved so convenient a support to the popedom for several generations. The mind of Grosseteste was always more clear in discerning the END of true religion than it was in discovering the MEANS of promoting it. Upright, intrepid, disinterested, and constantly influenced by the fear of God, he yet failed to bring about the good which he had conceived in his heart, because he had too little acquaintance with "the mystery of godliness," and because he too much relied on moral and prudential plans for that reformation of mankind, which is sought in vain from every thing, except from the knowledge and application of the Gospel.

But the bishop was rapidly advancing towards eternity; and he seems now to have had more powerful manifestations of divine truth from the Spirit of God than any with which he had hitherto been favoured. His zeal evidently arose from the purest charity. Superior to selfish considerations, he was absorbed in meditations concerning the Church; and we have from a contemporary historian "an account of his last conversations with his chaplains, in which there was probably something still more evangelical than what they or the historian could understand. It is, however, our duty to report it as it is delivered to us; and clergymen at least will find it worthy their attention.

"In October, the bishop, oppressed with

• Mat. Paris.

a fatal distemper, whatever it was, sent for some of his chaplains, and conversed with them. Christ, said he, with a sigh, came into the world to save souls: ought not be then, who takes pains to ruin souls, to be denominated Antichrist? Our God built the universe in six days, but he laboured more than thirty years to restore man when fallen. Is not then the destroyer of souls, the Antichrist and the enemy of God? The pope is not ashamed impudently to disannul, by his clauses of NON OBSTANTE, the decrees of the holy pontiffs his predecessors.—Many other popes have afflicted the Church; this INNOCENT has enslaved it more than they." He then recounts their usurious and fraudulent proceedings in England, and inveighs against the arts of amassing money practised by the friars on account of the crusades.—I have seen, said he, an instrument, in which it was inserted, that those, who, in their wills, devised money for the use of the crusades, should receive indulgence in proportion to the sum they gave.—He then exposed the scandalous practice of disposing of ecclesiastical benefices, and lamented that the friars, the devotees of poverty, were now converted into tax-gatherers to the pope, belying the habit they wore, while they were made more secular than ever. The bishop, indignant at these and other horrible proceedings, observed, "the Church can never be delivered from this Egyptian bondage, but by the edge of the sword;" and while he was scarcely able to speak for sighs and tears, his breath and his voice failed him. He might be sharpened in his accusations by the personal ill treatment which he himself had received; but it must be owned, that he had a distinct knowledge of facts, and a most just abhorrence of hypocrisy and iniquity. And it is only to be lamented, that he had lived so long a time, and remained so little acquainted with the only Christian armour of doctrine, which can cut down the powers of Antichrist. He died at Buckden, October 9, 1253. INNOCENT heard of his death with pleasure; and said with exultation, "I rejoice, and let every true son of the Roman church rejoice with me, that my great enemy is removed." He ordered a letter to be written to king Henry, requiring him to take up the bishop's body, to cast it out of the Church, and to burn it. The cardinals, however, opposed the tyrant; and the letter was never sent, probably on account of the decline of Innocent's health; for he died the succeeding year.

M. Paris, though most superstitiously attached to the Roman See, and prejudiced against the bishop of Lincoln, on account of his severity towards the ancient monastic orders, was, however, a man of probity and honour; and has left such a testimony to the

character of Grosseteste, as will deserve to be presented to the reader.^b

"The holy bishop Robert departed this world which he never loved, and which was always to him as a place of banishment. He was the open reprover both of my lord the pope, and of the king, and the censurer of the prelates, the corrector of monks, the director of priests, the instructor of the clergy, the supporter of scholars, the preacher to the laity, the punisher of incontinence, the diligent investigator of various writings, and lastly he was the scourge of lazy and selfish Romans, whom he heartily despised. In the supply of the temporal table, liberal, copious, polite, cheerful and affable. In the spiritual table, devout, humble, and contrite. In the episcopal office, diligent, venerable, and indefatigable." The historian adds to this, "that even in those instances of discipline, in which he seemed to bear the hardest on the monks, he was allowed to have acted always with the purest intentions."

Grosseteste appears to have had no great turn for public business: he neglected it for the most part; nor did he frequent the court. The salvation of souls was perpetually in his thoughts and in his mouth; and it is devoutly to be wished, that many, whose evangelical light is far superior to his, resembled him in tenderness of conscience, in unwearied activity and zeal, and in genuine humility and modesty of spirit, with which, notwithstanding the disadvantage of a temper plainly irascible in a great degree, he was very eminently endowed.

In one of his letters he shews the idea which he had formed of the importance of the pastoral office.^c "I dare not, for the love of God, say he confer the care of souls on any person, who will not sedulously discharge the office in person. The office itself is of the last importance; it requires a governor always *RESIDENT*, who applies himself to it, with vigilance, prudence, diligence, and fervour; who preaches the word of the Lord in season and out of season; who exhibits himself an example of good works; who, when he gives salutary admonition and is not regarded, can grieve and lament; who shakes his hands from holding bribes; who so evidently applies to pious uses the pecuniary fines, which he receives for the punishment of faults, that he is perfectly free from all suspicion of selfishness and avarice on that account; who is delighted, when he can with a good conscience acquit the accused; whom no prejudice, passion, intreaty, or gift, or partiality can divert from the path of rectitude; who delights in labour, and whose whole desire is to profit souls." He, who in an age of superstition, which afforded so many temptations to venality and corruption, could act

according to the spirit of these rules, must have been possessed of the spirit of Christ, and have been superior to the spirit of the world.

To have so much enlarged on the character and transactions of a man, so little distinguished, in regard to evangelical knowledge, as bishop Grosseteste was, from the common herd of papists in his time, might seem to need an apology, were I not sensible, that the eminence of his PRACTICAL godliness demonstrates, that he must have been in possession of the fundamentals of divine truth; and, that the candid and intelligent reader may receive edification from a light which burned with steadiness in the Church of God, though in much obscurity.

The evidence, however, of the bishop's knowledge of fundamental truths is not only to be collected by fair inferences, but is also direct and positive. A number of his sermons in manuscript are still extant.^d I have examined one of these throughout, which was preached from our Saviour's words in the sixth chapter of St. Luke, "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." Let it suffice to condense the ideas contained in this sermon into a narrow compass, by a very short abridgment, which to the best of my power shall be faithful to the sentiments of the author, though I have not thought it worth while to translate accurately the barbarous Latin of the original.

He undertakes to describe the poverty recommended in the text, which, by comparing with another evangelist,^e appears to be poverty in spirit. This poverty, he observes, is wrought in the heart of the elect by the Holy Spirit. Its foundation, he tells us, is laid in real humility, which disposes a man to feel, that he has nothing, except what he has received from above. But this is not all; for humility in this view belonged to Adam before he fell. But the humility of a *SINNER* has a still deeper root. The humble man not only sees that he has nothing in himself, but he is also stripped of all desire to possess in himself the springs of self-exaltation. Condemned in himself, and corrupt before God, he despairs of help from his own powers, and in seeking he finds HIM, who is the true life, wisdom, and health, who is all in all, even the incarnate Son of God, who descended into our vale of sin and misery, that he might raise us from their depths. By leaning on HIM alone, every true Christian rises into true life, and peace and joy. He lives in HIS life, he sees light in HIS light, he is invigorated with HIS warmth, and he grows in HIS strength, and leaning upon the Beloved, his soul ascends upwards. The lower he

^b Mat. Paris, p. 876. Edit. Lond. 1640.

^c Fagge.

^d They are preserved in the Cathedral of St. Peter's at York.

^e Matth. v.

sinks in humility, the higher he rises toward God. He is sensible that he not only is nothing in himself, but that he has also lost what he had gratuitously received, has precipitated himself into misery, and so subjected himself to the slavery of the devil; and lastly, that he has no internal resources for recovery. Thus he is induced to place his whole dependence on the Lord; and he is led to abhor himself, and always to prefer others, and "to take the lowest seat" as his own proper place. The humble soul is called on by our author solicitously to examine himself, whether he really demonstrates in his tempers and practice this grace of humility; and to beware lest, even if he do find some evidences of it in soul, he be inflated with the discovery, because he ought to know, that it is from the Lord alone that he is what he is; and that he ought no more to boast of himself than the shining colours in the glass should glory in that splendour, which they derive entirely from the solar rays. He observes, that the temptations to self-complacency are the effect of Satanic injections; and that it behoves him, who would be found unfeignedly humble, to see whether he has the genuine marks of humility in practice; whether, for instance, he can bear to be rebuked by an inferior, whether he is not rendered insolent by honours, whether he is not inflated by praise, whether among equals he is the first to labour, and the last to exalt himself, whether he can render blessings for curses, and good for evil. By such methods of self-examination he is to check the ebullitions of vain glory, with which the tempter is apt to inspire those, who seem to have made some proficiency in grace. If that proficiency be real, let them take care never to conceive of it as something separate from Christ: he alone dwelling in them by his Spirit produces all that is good, and to him alone the praise belongs.

To the directions and cautions concerning humility, which indeed form the most evangelical and most useful part of the sermon, the bishop adds some directions concerning the contempt of the world, and the love of heavenly things. On the latter subject he quotes Augustine and Gregory, on the former he addresses his audience, as having already embraced voluntary poverty. Hence it appears, that the discourse was addressed to a company of ascetics; and it must be confessed, that he labours with great correctness to prevent them from presumptuously imagining themselves to be just and righteous. Throughout the discourse there is excellent matter, and it is well calculated to humble the proud; but there is very little to encourage the sincere. He seems to have no idea of the attainment of a state of solid peace and joy; nor is it to be wondered at. Like most of the very best divines, who

wrote in those days, he knew not the just nature of the Christian article of justification by Jesus Christ the righteous; and though he appears to have trusted in him for eternal salvation, and knew too well his own deficiencies, to put any trust in himself, yet he evidently wanted the full assurance of understanding of the mystery of GODLINESS, and could not, with his inefficacious religious views, HAVE ACCESS WITH CONFIDENCE by the faith of Jesus.*

The honest and intrepid spirit, with which this excellent prelate opposed the scandalous practices of pope Innocent IV., sufficiently appears. But the Christian reader may not be displeased to see additional proofs of the genuine humility of his mind. Self-righteousness and self-confidence seem to have been his aversion in the extreme. Dependence on God as a reconciled father in Christ Jesus was his grand practical principle.—The following passages are translated from the Latin *Opuscula* of Grosseteste.^b

While he was archdeacon of Leicester, in one of his letters he writes thus: "Nothing that occurs in your letters ought to give me more pain than your styling me a person invested with authority, and endued with the lustre of knowledge. So far am I from thinking as you do, that I feel myself unfit even to be the disciple of a person of authority; moreover, in innumerable matters which are objects of knowledge, I perceive myself enveloped in the darkness of ignorance. But did I really possess the great qualities you ascribe to me, HE alone would be worthy of the praise; and the whole of it ought to be referred unto HIM, to whom we daily say, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give the glory."

The same modesty and self-abasement accompanied him to the episcopal chair. In his subsequent letters, he usually styled himself, "Robert, by divine permission, the poor minister of the Church of Lincoln."

On the important subject of divine grace, he expresses himself in the following manner: "Grace is that good pleasure of God, whereby he is pleased to bestow upon us what we have not deserved; and the gift is for our advantage, not His. Wherefore it is very clear, that all the good we possess, whether it be natural, or freely conferred afterwards, proceeds from the grace of God; because there is no good thing, the existence of which he does not will; and for God to will any thing, is to do it; therefore there can be no good of which he is not the author. He it is, who turns the human will from evil, and converts it to good, and also causes it to

* Colos. ii. 2.

^b Vol. II. Fascic. rec.

* Eph. iii. 12.

persevere in the same. Nevertheless man's free-will operates in this matter, as the grain shoots by an external germinative power, and by the heat of the sun and the moisture of the earth. For if it was impossible that we should turn from the evil and be converted to the good, we should not be commendable in so doing, nor should we be ordered in scripture to do so. And again, if we could do this without the grace of God, there would be no propriety in praying to God for it, nor would our success depend upon his will—A will to do good, by which a man becomes conformed to the will of God, is grace freely given. The divine will is grace; and grace is then said to be infused, when the divine will begins to operate upon our will."

This extract contains a fair representation

of Grosseteste's sentiments; and may be thought the more expedient, because some authors, in their accounts of the faith of this good prelate, seem to have suppressed such expressions as did not well accord with their own views. The historian endeavours to avoid controversy; yet he may be allowed to remark, that on the subjects of grace, free-will, and justification, bishop Grosseteste does not always preserve an invariable consistency. The wonder, however, as hath been justly observed, ought to be, that he should have seen "so well as he did. In general, he was eloquent, and mighty in the scriptures; fervent in spirit, speaking and teaching boldly the things of the Lord;—though, like Apollos, he sometimes needed an Acquila and Priscilla to expound to him the way of God more perfectly."

CENTURY XIV.

CHAPTER I.

THE GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE same ignorance and superstition, the same vices and immoralities, which predominated in the last century, discoloured the appearance of the Church in this. Real Christians were still to be found either only among the Waldenses, or else they worshipped God in obscurity under the unspeakable disadvantages of the general corruption. There arose, indeed, in this century various sectaries, besides the Waldenses, who were cruelly persecuted both by popes and emperors, of whom, therefore, at first sight we are ready to conclude, that they must have been the real people of God. I cannot, however, find positive evidence, that any of them professed the real doctrines, or were influenced by the real Spirit, of Jesus. Some of them were the disgrace of human nature, both in their principles and their practice; and I mean not to detail the narratives of fanaticisms, with which most ecclesiastical histories abound. The term Lollard was affixed in general to all those, who professed, whether on solid principles of godliness or not, a greater degree of attention to acts of piety and devotion, than the rest of mankind. Of these Walter Raynard, a Dutchman, was apprehended and burnt at Cologne. This is he, whom I have already called Raynard Lollard in the account of the Waldenses, and from whom the Wickliffites are supposed to

have acquired the name of Lollards. I have carefully attended to Mosheim's account of the origin of the term,¹ and am convinced from his reasonings, that Lollard was a general name of reproach given to professors of piety, and not the proper name of any particular person. But it by no means thence follows, as Mosheim contends, that Walter Raynard always belonged to some sect of the Romish communion. The accounts of the most eminent German authors constantly represent him as a protestant, and the common use of the term Lollard in England, as applied to the followers of Wickliffe and of Walter Raynard, could scarcely have obtained, if the latter had continued a papist till his death.²

The Church of God, therefore, considered as a society, seems only to have existed among the people, whose history has been related above.¹ Of other sects the detail would be as insipid, as it would be obscure and perplexed; and whoever has remarked the confusion of terms, which negligence, obloquy, or artifice, have introduced into the ecclesiastical accounts of sects and parties, will find little reason to acquiesce in the arrangements of their classes, which writers in different ages have made. Let us attend to facts rather than to terms. It is certain, that there were many societies of persons in

¹ See Mosheim, Vol. I. p. 744, 757.

² On the contrary, as it has been mentioned already, Walter Raynard, from a Franciscan and an enemy, became a Waldensian, preached the Gospel, and suffered on that account at Cologne,

¹ Waldenses.

this century called Beghards, Beguines, Lollards, Brethren of the Free Spirit, Flagellants, &c. who suffered extremely from the iron hand of power. Among all these, the people called Waldenses, and called also Lollards,—with what propriety is a question of little importance,—seem perfectly distinguished, by their solid piety, sound scriptural judgment, and practical godliness; and therefore they may justly be accounted to have suffered for righteousness' sake; while the rest, as far as certainly appears, were the martyrs of folly, turbulence, or impiety.

In the east the profession of Christianity still pervaded that contracted empire of the Greeks, of which Constantinople was the metropolis. But no Christian records are come down to us of any thing like the primitive Gospel. Even the profession of Christianity, which had existed in China, was extirpated through the jealousy of the reigning powers; and the famous Tamerlane the Tartar cruelly persecuted all who bore the Christian name, being persuaded, as a Mahometan, that it was highly meritorious to destroy them. Thus even the form of godliness lost ground in Asia;—the power of it, alas! had vanished long before. Nor were the attempts, which were made in Europe to renew the crusades, by means of indulgences, calculated to revive the light of the Gospel in the east, even if they had succeeded. The holy land had been lost in 1291; and an army was collected in 1363, under the auspices of pope Urban V. commanded by John king of France, that same monarch, who had been taken prisoner by Edward the black prince, at the battle of Poitiers. But John departed this life, and Urban's hopes from the crusade were blasted.

In the mean time the boundaries of Christianity had been gradually extended in Europe.^m Jagello, duke of Lithuania, was now almost the only pagan prince in that quarter of the world. And he, influenced by secular views, became a Christian in name and profession, and by this means acquired the crown of Poland. The Teutonic knights continued also their military methods of obliging the Prussians and Livonians to profess the Gospel, and completed in this century, what they had begun in the last.

The maxims and examples of the court of Rome were unspeakably prejudicial to the cause of godliness in this century. The practice of *raovisions*, which had so much inflamed the zeal of bishop Grosseteste, was now reduced into a system by the popes who resided in France, and all Europe complained of their impositions. In England, in the beginning of the reign of Edward III. almost upon every vacancy the court of Rome

pretended to fill the Sees in this way.ⁿ Indeed its ambition and avarice were unbounded: it claimed a right to dispose of all offices in the Church both great and small, and in that way amassed incredible sums. That same Boniface VIII., whom we left in the pontifical See at the close of the last century, filled the Christian world with the noise and turbulence of his ambition. He followed the steps of Hildebrand, and attempted to be equally despotic in civil and ecclesiastical matters. He it was, who forbade the clergy to pay any thing to princes without his permission.^o He also instituted a jubilee, which was to be renewed every hundred years, by which he granted plenary indulgences to all strangers, who should visit the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome.^p This unprincipled pontiff died in extreme misery in 1303, in the ninth year of his papacy.

The schism which afterwards took place in the popedom was providentially a blessing to mankind. While, for the space of fifty years, the Church had two or three heads at the same time; and, while each of the contending popes was anathematizing his competitors, the reverence of mankind for the popedom itself was insensibly diminished, and the labours of those, whom God raised up to propagate divine truth began to be more seriously regarded by men of conscience and probity.

In this century flourished the celebrated John Duns Scotus. Whether he was born in England, Scotland, or Ireland, has been disputed. That he was a famous schoolman is well known. But in the light of true religion I know nothing concerning him. The same thing may be said of Raymond Lully, William Ockham of Surry, in England, and of Petrarch, that great reviver of polite literature in Italy. These were some of the most famous men in their age; but they helped not the Church of God. Toward the close, however, of this period,—for the most part one of the most uninteresting in Church-history,—there arose in England a luminary,^q whose principles, conduct, and writings will require a distinct consideration, and whom I reserve to the third chapter. The same country furnishes us also with another extraordinary, though much obscure character, I mean Bradwardine, archbishop of Canterbury, of whom an account will be given in the next chapter.—In the remainder of this it will be worth while to add a few particular circumstances, which may show in what sort of an age Bradwardine lived.

The accounts of individuals, in this century, who truly feared God and wrought

ⁿ Collier.

^o Du Pin.

^p The successors of Boniface finding, that the jubilee augmented the revenue of the Roman Church, fixed its return to every twenty-fifth year.

^q Wickliffe.

^m Mosheim, Vol. I. p. 713.

righteousness, are extremely rare. One person, I find on the continent, who seems not unworthy of a place in these memoirs, I mean Eleazar, count of Arian in Naples, born in 1295. At the age of twenty-three he succeeded to his father's estate. That this youth, in very affluent circumstances, and at a time of life when the passions are usually strong, could support a constant tenour of devotion and religious seriousness to his death, which took place about five years after, seems scarcely to have originated from principles lower than those of real Christianity. The regulations of his household are very remarkable: some of which are as follows.

"I cannot allow any blasphemy in my house, nor any thing in word or deed which offends the laws of decorum.

Let the ladies spend the morning in reading and prayer, the afternoon at some work.

Dice and all games of hazard are prohibited.

Let all persons in my house divert themselves at proper times, but never in a sinful manner.

Let there be constant peace in my family; otherwise two armies are formed under my roof, and the master is devoured by them both.

If any difference arise, let not the sun go down upon your wrath.

We must bear with something, if we have to live among mankind. Such is our frailty, we are scarcely in tune with ourselves a whole day; and if a melancholy humour come on us, we know not well what we would have.

Not to bear and not to forgive, is diabolical; to love enemies, and to do good for evil, is the mark of the children of God.

Every evening all my family shall be assembled at a godly conference, in which they shall hear something of God and salvation. Let none be absent on pretence of attending to my affairs. I have no affairs so interesting to me as the salvation of my domestics.

I seriously forbid all injustice, which may cloak itself under colour of serving me."

"If I feel an impatience under affront, said he on one occasion, I look at Christ. Can any thing, which I suffer, be like to that which he endured for me?"

We are told that his conduct in life corresponded to these maxims. I could not prevail on myself to pass over in silence such a character as this, whom general history, full of the intrigues and ambitious enterprises of popes and princes, neither knows nor regards. God has his secret saints in the dustiest seasons of the Church, and Eleazar seems to have been one of these. But he was soon removed from this vale of sorrow; for he died in the twenty-eighth year

of his age. His behaviour in his last sickness was of a piece with his life. The history of our Saviour's passion was read to him daily, and his mind was consoled by this means amidst the pains with which he was afflicted."

But, whoever in these times had any serious impressions of religion, could scarcely meet with the least solid instruction. For the preaching of the word was so much disused, that it is remarked as a singular commendation of Thomas De la Mare, abbot of St. Albans in the time of our king Edward III., that he preached in the priory of Tinmouth, where he presided, before he was elected abbot of St. Albans, and employed many secular clergy and mendicants to do the same, perceiving the function of preaching to be wholly omitted in monasteries,* little practised by the seculars, and engrossed by the mendicants. If "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," we may venture to affirm, that whenever Christian preaching is disused or despised, whether through the influence of superstition or of refinement, then godliness is at a low ebb, and the principles of Christianity are almost unknown. A pious Eleazar may in some measure supply the want to his own family; but what must be the state of knowledge in the world at large? The truths of the Gospel are by no means obvious; they require study, attention, meditation; all the prejudices of our fallen nature oppose them when brought into full prospect: how dark then must be the minds of those, who never hear of them! The formalities of monasticism may give a false peace to the conscience, but they cannot enlighten the understanding, nor regulate the heart. Hence, amidst the most splendid appearances of religion, wickedness abounded, and a cumbersome mass of superstitions was a poor substitute for the love of God and man. In the abbey of St. Albans the superiors decked themselves with excess of pompous attire. They wore vestments as rich as art and money could make them; and though they changed their attire every day, they could not bring them all into use. Such was the state of things, during the presidency of Thomas De la Mare, an abbot, who was looked on as the mirror of piety.

Some attempts were, however, made in England to stem the torrent of ecclesiastical corruption. Even in the preceding century about the year 1265,† a national synod, held at London under Othobon, the pope's legate, undertook to reform the abuses, of which the whole nation loudly complained. This synod, in which Welch, Scotch, and Irish clergymen were present as well as English, was looked on as of great authority,

* Butler.

† Newcome's History of St. Albans.

Collier.

and as a rule of ecclesiastical discipline to the Church. Several of its canons are still in force, and make part of the canon-law. The ninth canon provides against the evil of non-residence, obliges the clergyman presented to a benefice, to resign his other preferments, and swear to reside. The twentieth provides against commutations for offences, and forbids the archdeacon ever to receive money on such accounts; for, "such practices," say the synod, "amount, in effect, to the grant of a license to sin." Severe, but just censure of the whole papal doctrine of indulgences! And how little room was there to hope, that this canon would be strictly observed in archdeaconries, or in any other limited district, while the supreme rulers of the Church were breaking it continually!

In a council held at Lambeth in 1281, a canon was enacted, which lays down rules of preaching concerning the fundamental articles of religion. It contains some wholesome truths, but mixed with much superstition. But the worst part of the canon is, that the parish-priest was obliged to explain these fundamental articles only once a quarter. One is almost tempted to think, that the dignitaries of the Church formerly prohibited some abuses, merely to save appearances, and were afraid, lest frequency of preaching might prove the means of a complete reformation. In the same council at Lambeth they allow the blood of Christ in the lesser churches, only to the priest, and the wine which they granted to the laity, they said, was merely wine. It was expressly declared, that the whole body and blood of Christ was given at once under the auspices of bread; though sometimes a cup of wine was given to the people. And thus the innovation of denying to the laity communion in both kinds was gradually introduced. This was one of the latest, and at the same time, one of the most shameless and absurd corruptions of popery, destitute of every ground of argument, either from scripture or common sense; nor is it easy to conceive how it could ever have found its way into Christendom. Was it, that those who invented it, intended to strengthen men's minds in the belief of transubstantiation, and also by sensible marks to impress on the imaginations of the people the superior dignity of the clergy? Be this as it may, we certainly find, that in this century, which we are at present reviewing, superstition has advanced some steps farther.

In the reign of Edward I., one of the wisest and most vigorous of our princes, it was natural for those who groaned under Romish oppressions, to expect some relief. But the pusillanimous conduct of his father Henry III. had, during a very long reign, enabled the popes to enslave the nation com-

pletely, and unless the successor had himself felt the spirit of godliness, of which there are no evidences, it was not to be expected, that he would exert himself for the good of the Church. Edward indeed was very great in the arts both of war and of peace; but in ecclesiastical matters he did little for his country. He paid, though with reluctance, the tribute imposed on king John, which had been remitted to Rome all the days of Henry III. He would not, however, allow it to be called a tribute; and he constantly maintained that he was not a vassal of the Roman See. His weak son and successor Edward II. cannot be supposed to have been capable of relieving the nation; but under Edward III. something was done to restrain the encroachments of the popedom. This great prince resolutely refused to pay the annual stipend to Rome, and procured a parliamentary declaration, that king John had no right to reduce the English realm to a state of vassalage. By the statute of provisors he secured the rights of patrons and electors of livings against the claims of the papal See, and out-lawed those who should dare to appeal to Rome.

On the continent also the papal tyranny met with some opposition. The emperor Lewis was excommunicated by pope Clement VI. because he had dared to exercise the imperial authority, which had been conferred on him by the electors, without waiting for the confirmation of the pope: and so prevalent was the reign of superstition, that Lewis was obliged to renounce the imperial dignity. There were not wanting, however, some learned men, who protested against these papal usurpations, and particularly Marsilius of Padua, who published a defence of the emperor's authority against the encroachments of the pope, and maintained some protestant positions, not only in regard to ecclesiastical government, but also in support of that which is infinitely more important, the pure doctrine of the gospel. In substance he appears to have held "that leading article of Christianity, justification before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; and he affirmed, that good works are not the efficient cause of our acceptance with God, but that on the contrary, they are the fruits of faith and follow after justification, which, in effect never exists, for any length of time, without them. Distinctions, nice indeed, and in the eyes of superficial thinkers in religion always apparently frivolous, though they are inseparably connected with the true relief of burdened consciences, and though they directly tend not only to undermine the whole system of papal fallacy, but also to promote true holiness of heart

• Collier.

• Spelman. Council. p. 329. Henry's Hist. Book V.

• Fox, Acts and Monum. Vol. I. p. 143.

and life.—But of this same *Morillius*, who saw so clearly an essential branch of evangelical truth, I rather conjecture than affirm, that he had the spirit of a wise and holy reformer.

About the same time, that is, about the middle of this century, *Conrade Hager*, in the city of *Herbipoli*,^a taught, for the space of twenty-four years together, that the mass was not properly a sacrifice for sin; and of consequence was of no avail either to the living or to the dead for their acceptance with God; and therefore that the money bestowed on the priests for masses in behalf of the deceased, was pregnant with superstitious abominations. It is probable, that he taught also good doctrine, as well as opposed that which was evil. The man was condemned as an heretic, and imprisoned; but history is silent concerning the issue of his afflictions.

In general, however, the great defect of those, who withstood the reigning corruptions in these times, was this; they distinctly complained of the fashionable abominations, but were very scanty in describing the real evangelical doctrines, which alone can relieve and sanctify the souls of men. This remark is but too applicable to the very best of the reformers, who appeared in Europe from this time till the era of the REFORMATION. That was a work, which well deserved its name, because it builded up as well as pulled down, and presented the Church with a new fabric, as well as demolished the old. It was a work, in which the characters of a divine influence appeared far more completely than in any of the former attempts against popery; and therefore its effects were lasting.—They remain to this day.

BUT THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS IS NOT TO BE DESPISED.^y

In this century, and probably towards the close of it, the *Ploughman's Complaint* appeared in England, a tract, which, with much zeal and energy, described the reigning abuses, and which, probably, was not without effect.

Richard Fitzraf^a was one of the most eminent confessors in this age. He was brought up at Oxford, and promoted by *Edward III.* to the archbishopric of *Armagh* in Ireland. He distinguished himself by opposing the pretensions of the mendicant orders; who, armed with papal authority, encroached on the rights of the secular clergy, and prevented them from the exercise of godly discipline. "I have," said he, "in my diocese of *Armagh*, about two thousand persons, who stand condemned by the censures of the Church, denounced every year against murderers, thieves, and such like malefactors, of all which number scarcely fourteen have applied to me or my clergy for absolution. Yet they all re-

ceive the sacraments, as others do, because they are absolved, or pretend to be absolved, by friars."

Nor was this the only point in which *Fizraf* opposed the mendicants. He withstood their practice of begging; and maintained, that it is every man's duty to support himself by honest labour;—that it forms no part of Christian wisdom and holiness for men to profess themselves mendicants,—that to subsist by begging ought to be matter of necessity, never of choice,—that the Son of God, as he never taught such doctrine, so he never practised it in his own person,—and that, though he was always poor when on earth, he never was a beggar. This was to strike at the root of the pretended sanctity of the friars, who were enraged to find the very practice, in which they gloried as matter of extraordinary virtue, represented as in its own nature unlawful. *Fizraf* was therefore cited by the friars to appear before pope *Innocent VI.* and to give an account of the doctrine, which he had broached and maintained both in the pulpit and in conversation. The archbishop obeyed; and, in the presence of the pope, defended at large the rights of parochial ministers against the intrusions of the mendicants, and exposed the various enormities of the latter. What effect his defence had on the mind of the pope does not distinctly appear. It is certain, however, that this confessor was persecuted both by civil and ecclesiastical powers, and underwent a variety of hardships. In a certain confession or prayer which our martyrologist^b saw, and intended, as he tells us, to publish, *Fizraf* describes the history of his own life, and particularly declares how the Lord had instructed him, and brought him out of the vanities of Aristotelian subtlety to the study of the scriptures. The beginning of the prayer in Latin is given us by *Fox*, and it will deserve to be translated: "To thee be praise, glory and thanksgiving, O Jesus most holy, most powerful, most amiable, who hast said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life;' a way without aberration, truth without a cloud, and a life without end. For thou hast shewn to me the way; thou hast taught me the truth; and thou hast promised me life. Thou wast my way in exile, thou wast my truth in counsel, and thou wilt be my life in reward."

This holy person was seven or eight years in banishment, and died in that situation, having defended his tenets by words and by writings to his death. Of his refutation of the reigning abuses the account is large, but to us at least at this day tedious and unnecessary; of his Christian spirit, doctrine, and sufferings, the account is very brief, but I think sufficient to shew, that GOD WAS WITH HIM.

^a *Fox*, Id. p. 44.

^y *Zech* iv.

^b *Fox*, p. 464, &c.

About the year 1372, pope Gregory XI. dispatched a bull to the archbishop of Prague, in which he commanded him to excommunicate Militizius, a Bohemian. This man had belonged to some religious order at Prague, and having forsaken it, had given himself to preaching, and had certain congregations following him. Among these were several harlots, who, being converted from their wickedness, now led a godly life. Militizius was wont to say of them, that in religious attainments they were superior to all the Nuns in Christendom. Another of his assertions, which provoked the indignation of pope Gregory, was, that Antichrist was already come. In his writings he declared, that he was moved by the Holy Spirit, to search out by the scriptures, concerning the coming of Antichrist. Little more is recorded concerning this confessor, than that he was at length silenced and imprisoned by the archbishop of Prague.

There were others, who opposed the corruptions of the times; but the account is too obscure and scanty to be interesting. And he, who loves to see the practical power of divine truth, would wish, not only that opposition should be made to Antichrist, but much more that the positive marks of Christian godliness should be manifest. Both in private and in public life there were, doubtless, some sincere servants of God and his Christ; and I wish I could gratify the mind of the pious reader with an instructive relation of them. But of such men history is almost silent. APPARENT BARI NANTES IN QUORUM VASTO.—However, in the dearth of faithful and intelligent Christians, a brief review of the character and writings of Thomas Bradwardine will not only afford gratification, but excite surprise.—He appears to have been an extraordinary man; and he has left behind him unequivocal marks of real holiness.

CHAPTER II.

THOMAS BRADWARDINE.

This learned and pious person is supposed to have been born about the middle of the reign of king Edward I. He was of Merton college, Oxford, and was one of the Proctors of that university in 1325. He excelled in mathematical knowledge, and was in general distinguished for his accurate and solid investigations in divinity. There was a depth in his researches, which entitled him to the name of "the profound."^b He seems to have been so devoted to a reclusive and sedentary life, that very little has come down to us

concerning his conduct and transactions. He was confessor to king Edward III. and attended that monarch in his French wars. It is observed that he often preached before the army. On occasion of a vacancy in the See of Canterbury, the monks of that city chose him archbishop; but Edward, who was fond of his company, refused to part with him. Another vacancy happening soon after, the monks elected him a second time, and Edward yielded to their desires. The modesty and innocence of his manners, and his unquestionable piety and integrity, seem to have been the principal causes of his advancement. He was, however, by no means adapted to a court; and soon found himself out of his element. His personal manners and deportment were the object of derision to the courtiers; and when he was consecrated at Avignon, cardinal Hugh, a nephew of the pope, ridiculed the prelate by introducing into the hall a person habited as a peasant riding on an ass, petitioning the pope to make him archbishop of Canterbury.^c This was one of "the spurs, which patient merit of the unworthy takes." But the jest was found not to answer the ungenerous views of him who made it. It appeared to the assembly, that solid learning and understanding, though destitute of exterior accomplishments, when clothed with piety and humility, as in Bradwardine's case, were by no means proper subjects of ridicule and contempt. The pope and his cardinals resented the indignity, and frowned on the insolent contriver.

Bradwardine was consecrated in 1349, in the twenty-third year of Edward III.—but not many weeks after his consecration, and only seven days after his return into England, he died at Lambeth. His departure out of life seems to have been a providential mercy to himself. For we may well doubt whether his elevation would have increased either his comfort or his reputation.—He, who, before his promotion, was judged of all men the most worthy to preside in the Church, would in all probability, partly on account of the habits of a studious life, and partly on account of the complexion of the times, have soon been deemed unequal to the office. In the early periods of the Church he might have shone with distinguished lustre; but a pious archbishop of simple manners could have done little service to the Church in that age.

His great work was "concerning the cause of God against Pelagius." An admirable performance! whether one considers the force of his genius, the solidity of his reasoning powers, or the energy of his devotion. In reviewing it, it gave me great satisfaction to observe, that the Spirit of God had not

^b Bradwardine's Life prefixed to his works.

Henry's Hist. of England, Fourteenth Century.

forsoke the Church; but on the contrary, in one of the darkest periods had raised up a defender of divine truth, who might have done honour to the brightest. Abstracted from the spirit of the times in which he lived, Bradwardine gave himself up to the investigation of real Gospel-truth; and he published to the world, in a large volume, the fruit of his researches.—Some few extracts may give the reader a just idea of his doctrine and spirit; and may also throw some light on the state of religion in the age in which he lived.

In the preface he lays open his heart, and explains the exercises of his mind on the great subject of divine grace, which he attempts to defend against the supporters of the doctrine of free-will; a term, which I have repeatedly observed to be improper; and which, as used by him and by most, if not all, of the fathers, who really loved evangelical truth, means much the same, as self-sufficiency. Bradwardine had observed how very few in his days appeared to be conscious of their need of the Holy Spirit: to renew their natures; and, being himself deeply sensible of the "desperate wickedness of the human heart, and of the preciousness of the grace of Christ, he seems to have overlooked or little regarded the fashionable superstitions of his time, and to have applied the whole vigour and vehemence of his spirit to the defence of the foundations of the Gospel. But let us hear him speak for himself.

"As I am somewhat encouraged by the countenance of those who love the cause of God, so I own I am discouraged by the opposition of those who embrace the cause of Pelagius, who are, alas! far more numerous. For behold,—I speak it with real grief of heart,—as formerly 850 prophets, with the addition of numbers of the populace without end, were united against one prophet of the Lord, so at this day, how many, O Lord, contend for freewill against thy gratuitous graces, and against St. Paul the spiritual champion of grace! How many indeed in our times despise thy saving grace; and maintain, that freewill suffices for salvation! or if they use the term grace, how do they boast, that they deserve it by the strength of freewill; so that grace in their eyes appears to be sold at a price, and not freely conferred from above! How many, presuming on the power of their own freewill, refuse thy influence in their operations, saying with the ungodly, depart from us! How many, extolling the liberty of their own will, refuse thy service; or, if with their lips they own that thou co-operatest with them, how do they, like the proud, disobedient, angels of old, who hated thee, refuse that thou shouldst reign over them! Nay, prouder than Satan, and not content

to esteem themselves thy equals, they most arrogantly boast, that they reign above thee, the King of kings. For they fear not to maintain, that their own will in common actions goes before as the mistress, that thine follows as a handmaid; that they go before as lords, that thou followest as a servant, that they as kings command, and that thou as a subject obeyest. How many support Pelagianism with clamour, raillery, and derision! Almost the whole world is gone after Pelagius into error. Arise, O Lord, judge thy own cause: Sustain him who undertakes to defend thy truth; protect, strengthen, and comfort me. For thou knowest, that, no where relying on my own strength, but trusting in thine, I, a weak worm, attempt to maintain so great a cause."

From the vehemence of his complaints it appears, that together with the triumphant progress of superstition, the Christian world had made rapid advances in self-sufficiency. The scholastic learning, which was ardently cultivated, had enlisted itself on the side of Pelagianism, or at least of Semi-Pelagianism. Those, who were not hardy enough to maintain the merit of condignity, yet strenuously held the merit of congruity, which was indeed the favourite theme of the fashionable divines. By its assistance they arrogated to themselves the merit of doing certain good actions, which would render it meet and equitable, that God should confer saving grace on their hearts.* This is that grace of congruity, which the Church of England condemns in her 13th article; and it was, among others, only one of those methods, by which the natural pride of a heart unacquainted with its own total apostasy endeavours to support its dignity, and to prevent an ingenuous confession of helplessness and of complete unworthiness. History shews this sentiment to be perfectly Semi-Pelagian. "Inward preventing grace, say that sect, is not necessary to form in the soul the first beginnings of true repentance and amendment; every one is capable of producing these by the mere power of his natural faculties, as also of exercising faith in Christ, and of forming the purposes of a holy, and sincere obedience," but they acknowledge also, that "none can persevere or advance in that holy and virtuous course, without the perpetual support and the powerful assistance of grace."

Something like this, seems to be the religion natural to man as a fallen creature, when he "leans to his own understanding," and derives not his creed from divine revelation; and when at the same time he is not advanced by a more uncommon degree of hardihood

* Condignity implies merit: and of course, claims reward on the score of justice. Congruity pretends only to a sort of imperfect qualification for the gift and reception of God's grace.

† Mosheim. Vol. I. p. 377.

into the pride of perfect Pelagianism. On this plan, Bradwardine thinks, that God is made the servant, man the master; and it is remarkable, that a poet of our own, who seems to have embraced this scheme, admits the same thought, when he says,

Heaven but persuades, Almighty man deceives;
Man is the maker of immortal fates.

I am sensible how much has been said, and may be said with great plausibility in support of the poet's doctrine. But it is perfectly foreign to the design of this history, to enter into so boundless a field of controversy. Suffice it once more to refer the reader to Edward's treatise on the freedom of the will, for a full and complete confutation of the scheme. I shall only add, that all truly humble souls, whose consciences have felt the force of Christian doctrine, are assuredly persuaded that their salvation is altogether of grace from first to last, by the certain testimony not only of scripture, but also of their own experience, though they may never have formally discussed the controversy before us. Such a soul, if I mistake not, was that of Bradwardine; and as he was conscious of the pernicious tendency of SELF-SUFFICIENCY, he writes from a heart inflamed with zeal for the divine glory, and labouring with charitable concern for the souls of men.

Bradwardine goes on in his preface to inform us, how he had prayed, and with what strength and consolation he had been favoured. His spirit appears to have been under the steady influence of humility and piety, while he was reflecting on the subject. After having described the opposition made to divine grace from age to age, he thus concludes: "I know, O Lord God, that thou dost not despise nor forsake those who love thee, but thou dost sustain, teach, cherish, strengthen, and confirm them. Relying on this thy goodness and truth, I undertake to war under thy invincible banners."

The treatise itself is worthy of him who was called the *PRUDENT*. The author appears to have been endowed with a strong argumentative mind; but the work is too metaphysical for the perusal of ordinary readers, nor would it answer any valuable purpose to present the reader with a regular abridgment of its contents. The mode of writing in that age was tedious and prolix beyond measure; and it must be ascribed to the infection of the scholastic turn of those times, that Bradwardine wrote against the errors of the schoolmen in their own style and manner. He possessed not the useful qualification of writing in a plain scriptural manner, and of making use of arguments equally capable of impressing all ranks of men. The popular

talent of perspicuously displaying divine truths, and of happily illustrating them by proofs drawn from scripture and experience, was at that time hardly known in Christendom.

Some concise observations however, and a selection of a few remarkable passages, may give the reader an idea of the nature of the work.

He undertakes to lay before mourning penitents the consolations of the gospel; and particularly, to animate and cheer the hearts of those who are ready to despair on account of the greatness of their transgressions.^a He tells us, that some Jews once declared to him, that those, who had sinned four times repeatedly, were entirely excluded from all possibility of pardon, grounding their notion on the expression several times repeated in the first chapter of Amos, "for three transgressions, and for four." Against this mean conceit, worthy of a rabbinical taste, he shows the immensity of the divine perfections of goodness and mercy, and represents them as far surpassing the limited evils of men, provided the sinner repent and humbly come to God.

"Josephus^b tell us, says he, that the Sadducees thought it a glorious thing to contend against the renowned doctors of their nation in philosophical points: thus, at this day I fear very many seek glory by overturning or seeming to overturn the constructions and interpretations of others. They, who have not a single house or cottage^c of their own erection, are peculiarly infected with the love of glory; they are indeed the bolder in dismantling the buildings of others, because they are in no fear of retaliation, as they have nothing of their own to lose." So exactly similar have scepticisms been in all ages! for example, the Sadducees in the time of Josephus, the Pelagians in the time of Bradwardine, and those who at this day arrogate to themselves exclusively the credit of being RATIONAL in religion. Dubious and hesitating in regard to their own systems, vehement and decisive against the systems of others, they even glory that they have not yet completed their own creed, while they condemn as bigots all who profess to have determinate articles of faith, as if the perfection of wisdom lay in reasoning against every thing, and in determining nothing; or as if the scripture was not a form of sound words, which we ought to hold fast without wavering, so far as it reveals to us the doctrines of God and the path of duty. Bradwardine observing, that a disputatious and sceptical spirit resulted from the pride of the heart, prays earnestly for a heaven-taught simplicity of mind; and

^a Book I. p. 29.

^b P. 145.

^c This metaphorical language is used by Bradwardine against the boasting critics of his own day, to denote their poverty of invention in religious subjects.

while he takes notice, that God despises the proud, he thankfully owns that he visits, illuminates, and rejoices with the simple.

He maintains the doctrine of a universal, decisive, Providence; and justly exposes the absurdity of the common language of mankind concerning fortune. He observes how often it is said in Scripture, that the Lord will put his fear into the hearts of the unwise of his people, will fight for his Church, will go before them, &c. He asserts, that God meant to show by these declarations, that this is his general plan of government, which is always carried on by his energy, though that energy may be often invisible, or not accompanied with sensible miracles; that the promises of divine support are specially applicable to spiritual conflicts; as, in them more particularly, the Lord means to teach the impotent and the miserable where they should place their hope, and seek for strength, victory, and salvation. "Let him, says he, who likes not these things, hope in princes, trust in man, make flesh his arm, and in his heart depart from the Lord; let him trust in his bow, let him fancy that his sword will save him; and if he be successful, let him not return thanks, nor bless the Lord in hymns of grateful acknowledgment, because he owes, forsooth, no obligation to him: and I no way doubt, but though he call himself a Christian; he will pay less regard to the true God, than a Pagan does to an idol, to whom he offers sacrifice. But, let others hope as they please, it is good for me, in every conflict, to hold fast by God."

He makes an excellent practical use of his doctrine of Providence. "He, who excludes from his creed the view of Divine Providence, disposing of all events, not permissively, but actually,—removes, so far as in him lies, from every troubled person the greatest encouragements to patience, hope, consolation, and joy. Who will serenely bear adversity, if he believe it to proceed from chance, or ultimately from an enemy; and if he do not know, that it really proceeds from, and is guided by, the unerring direction of the all-wise God, who, by this means, though invisible to human sight, purges sins, exercises virtues, and accumulates rewards? He, doubtless, who does thus believe in Divine Providence, has every advantage for patience and composure of mind, because he knows that all things work together for his good. Thus rough places are made smooth to all the saints of God, hard things are softened, the edge of suffering is blunted, and bitter things are tempered sweetly: And thus a singular solace, a principal and a never-failing refreshment, in all adversities, is provided for me, a sinful worm. With what patience may all disagreeable events be endured by the man, who fears and loves God; and who firmly believes that the great

and wise Being, who can require nothing but what is wise and good, actually requires him to bear such things!—This, I think, is to make the Lord's yoke easy, and his burden light."

I find that he agrees with the account, which has been given, concerning the author of the letter to Demetrius. For he shews, that Augustine, in his first book against Pelagius and Celestius, asserts that letter to be the work of Pelagius, quoting and arguing against a part of it in the plainest terms, and that nothing can, be a more groundless surmise than to ascribe the epistle in question to Jerom. He also goes over the same ground which Augustine had gone over before him in confuting Pelagianism.

He largely refutes the error, more famous than any other in his day, namely, that men, by their works, deserve grace of congruity. "By this it is, says he, that men rush headlong into Pelagianism. Not content with gratuitous grace, men would have grace to be sold by God, though at a very cheap rate." He proves, that men are, naturally destitute of the least spark of genuine love to God, without which it seems impossible that they should have any claim upon him in any sense whatever. He also disapproves the error of those, who contend, that grace is conferred on account of future merits foreseen.

He observes, that Robert bishop of Lincoln, in his questions on the will of God, and in his other works, seems to favour Pelagianism, when he teaches, that the Supreme Being does never antecedently determine the free acts of the will, but that the will, in its own nature, possesses a self-determining power; and that the event may always be either compliance or non-compliance with those gracious influences by which God excites the mind to virtue.

The following is an extract of Bradwardine's devout meditations on the subjects discussed in the treatise.

"O great and wonderful Lord, our God, thou only light of the eyes! Open, I implore thee, the eyes of my heart, and of others my fellow creatures, that we may truly understand and contemplate thy wondrous works! And the more thoroughly we comprehend them, the more may our minds be affected, in the contemplation, with pious reverence and profound devotion. Who is not struck with awe in beholding thy all-powerful WILL, completely efficacious throughout every part of the creation? It is by this same sovereign and irresistible WILL, that whom, and when thou pleasest, thou bringest low and liftest up, killest and makest alive.—How intense and how unbounded is thy love to me, O Lord! Whereas, my love, how feeble and remiss! My gratitude, how cold and inconsistent!—Far be it from thee, that thy love should ever resemble mine; for in every kind

of excellence thou art consummate. O thou, who fillest heaven and earth, why fillest thou not this narrow heart? O human soul, low, abject, and miserable, whoever thou art, if thou be not fully replenished with the love of so great a good, why dost thou not open all thy doors, expand all thy folds, extend all thy capacity, that, by the sweetness of love so great, thou mayest be wholly occupied, satiated, and ravished; especially since, little as thou art, thou canst not be satisfied with the love of any good inferior to the *ONE SUPREME*?—Speak the word, that thou mayest become my God and most amiable in mine eyes, and it shall instantly be so, without the possibility of failure. What can be more efficacious to engage the affections, than preventing love?—Most gracious Lord, by thy love thou hast prevented me, wretch that I am, who had no love for thee, but was at enmity with my Maker and Redeemer. I see, Lord, that it is easy to say and to write these things, but very difficult to execute them. Do thou, therefore, to whom nothing is difficult, grant, that I may more easily practise these things with my heart, than utter them with my lips: Open thy liberal hand, that nothing may be easier, sweeter, or more delightful to me, than to be employed in these things.—Thou, who preventest thy servants with thy gracious love, Whom dost not thou elevate with the hope of finding thee? And, What canst thou deny to him, who loves thee, who is in need, and who supplicates thy aid? Permit me, I pray, to reason with thy magnificent goodness, that my hopes may be enlarged. It is not the manner, even of human friendship, to reject a needy friend, especially when the ability to relieve is abundant.

“Why do we fear to preach the doctrine of the predestination of saints, and of the genuine grace of God? Is there any cause to dread, lest man should be induced to despair of his condition, when his hope is demonstrated to be founded on God alone? Is there not much stronger reason for him to despair, if, in pride and unbelief, he founds his hope of salvation on himself?”

Such were the ardent breathings of soul in a studious and thoughtful scholar of the fourteenth century; who, unaided by human connexions, in an age dreary and unpromising throughout Europe and in our own island full of darkness, seems to have lived the life of faith on the Son of God. The light of the Waldensian doctrine had been all along confined to the continent. But *HE*, who shews mercy, because he will shew mercy, and who had, in some measure, paved the way to the more copious exhibition of his grace by the life and writings of Bradwardine, was preparing, not long after his decease, to revive the light of divine truth in England, and there to form a people for himself, who should set forth his praise.

SIR HENRY SAVILE, the learned editor of the principal work of Bradwardine, informs us, that this extraordinary man devoted his main application to the study of theology and mathematics; and that particularly in the latter he distanced, perhaps, the most skilful of his contemporaries. In proof of these assertions the editor refers to several of Bradwardine's mathematical tracts, and to a large manuscript volume of astronomical tables, which Sir Henry had then in his own possession, and considered as a very elaborate and valuable performance. “But in divinity,” says he, “this single treatise which I now publish, will be a lasting monument of his superior talents. It was written in support of the cause of God against the Pelagian heresy, which experience shews to be a growing evil in every age. The substance of the work had been delivered in lectures at Oxford; and the author, at the request of the students of Merton College, arranged, enlarged, and polished them, while he was chancellor of the diocese of London. No sooner was this performance given to the public, than it was received with the greatest applause of all learned doctors, and found its way into almost every library throughout Europe. As Bradwardine was a very excellent mathematician, he endeavoured to treat theological subjects with a mathematical accuracy; and was the first divine, as far as I know, who pursued that method. Hence this book against Pelagianism is one regular, connected series of reasoning, from principles or conclusions which have been demonstrated before.

“If, in the several lemmas and propositions, a mathematical accuracy is not on all occasions completely preserved, the reader must remember to ascribe the defect to the nature of the subject, rather than to the author.”

This account of the extreme singularity of Bradwardine's taste appeared worthy of notice.

Mr. Milner, in p. 82, has concisely observed, that Bradwardine attended king Edward the third in his French wars, and that he often preached before the army.—His biographer, Sir Henry, is more particular:—he tells us, that some writers of that time attributed the signal victories of Edward, rather to the virtues and holy character of his chaplain and confessor Bradwardine, than to the bravery or prudence of the monarch or of any other person. “He made it his business to calm and mitigate the fierceness of his master's temper when he saw him either immoderately fired with warlike rage, or improperly flushed with the advantages of victory. He also often addressed the army; and with so much meekness, and persuasive

discretion, as to restrain them from those insolent excesses which are too frequently the attendants of military success."

Bradwardine's treatise against the Pelagians, which is so much extolled by Sir H. Savile, is a folio of almost nine hundred pages.—It may not be disagreeable to the reader to peruse a few additional extracts, on account of, 1. The important matter they contain, and 2. The mathematical accuracy of manner which this author constantly endeavours to support, and which is, in general, so unusual in the treating of such subjects.

OF THE DIVINE BEING.

Among the first positions, which he undertakes to prove, are these, That God is not contingently, but necessarily perfect. That he is incapable of changing. That he is not liable, for example, to the emotions of joy, sorrow, anger; or, in any respect passive. Since if he was, he would be changeable; whereas God is always the same, and never varies. He cannot change for the better, because he is already perfectly good. Neither can he change for the worse, because he is necessarily perfect, and therefore cannot cease to be so. Lastly, he cannot change to a state equally good, because such an alteration could answer no end, and would in reality imply some defect.

He observes, that the DIVINE WILL is universally efficacious, which, he contends, is a mark of much higher perfection, than if his will could be frustrated, hindered, or miss of its intent. If, it were possible for God to wish any thing, and yet not bring it to pass, he would and must from that moment cease to be perfectly happy; especially as it is impossible that he should choose any thing but what is right.

CONCERNING MERIT.

Most powerfully he beats down the doctrine of HUMAN MERIT. He will not allow that men can merit at the hand of God, either antecedently or subsequently, that is, either prior to grace received or after it. Is it not more bountiful to give than to barter? to bestow a thing freely, and for nothing, than for the sake of any preceding or subsequent desert, which would be a sort of price? Even a generous man often confers benefits on others without any view to the previous or succeeding merit of the object. Much more does God do this, who is infinitely richer in bounty, than the most liberal of his creatures.

Has not TRUTH itself declared, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And does not the apostle of truth use the words, "In him we live, move, and have our being!" I therefore repeat, That it must be

manifest to every one, who has a sound understanding, 1. That no thing whatever can put any other thing into motion, unless God himself, by his own proper influence, give motion to the thing so moved. 2. That no thing whatever can put any other into motion without God's being the immediate mover of it. And even, 3. That whatsoever is put in motion by any thing else, is more immediately moved by God himself than by the instrument which sets it in motion, be that instrument what it will. Now if any person should cavil at this doctrine, and say, That this argument would make the Supreme Being the author of many actions, even wicked actions, which are not fit to be named, the answer is, The words which express those actions are not to be taken strictly or absolutely, but only as they relate to the creature, not as descriptive of the real essence of the actions, but only of their nature when viewed as the effects of human powers..... In every formation and in every motion there must be some unoriginated former; else the process would be endless.

It should be remembered, that the historian never pretends to dictate to his reader, nor even to explain his own opinion on these intricate subjects. He only ventures to lay before him the judgment of an excellent christian, and a most acute metaphysician of the fifteenth century.

OF THE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

What Bradwardine delivers concerning the KNOWLEDGE of God, is worthy of the utmost attention.

It is certain, that God hath a knowledge of all things present, of all things past and of all things to come; which knowledge is, in the highest sense, actual, particular, distinct, and infallible. It may be considered as either simple, or approbative. His simple or absolute knowledge extends to every thing. His knowledge of approbation, over and above the former, includes his good pleasure and complacency of will. He produces scripture in support of this distinction of the divine knowledge, as Matthew xxv. 12. Verily I say unto you, I KNOW you not. And 1 Cor. viii. 3. If any man love God, he is KNOWN of him.

The fifteenth chapter of the first book is wholly taken up in proving, THAT THINGS KNOWN are not the foundation of the knowledge of God. Knowledge is a principal perfection in God. If therefore his knowledge were derived from the objects with which it is conversant, it would follow that a part of the perfection of God was derived from some other sources than himself, in which case HE must cease to be self-perfect. He would moreover cease to be all-sufficient: he would stand in need of created help to render his knowledge com-

plete. And how could his glory be unvalued, if any portion of it was suspended on borrowed assistance? Add to this, if the things that are known by God, are verily the producing cause of his knowing them, they must be antecedent to his knowledge, either in the order of time, or of nature. But they are not prior to his knowledge in either of these respects; for they are all created in time; whereas God and his knowledge are eternal. Besides, if the Deity received any degree of his intelligence from the beings he has made, he would cease to be purely active; he would be passive in that reception. Whence it would also follow that he must be susceptible of change. Nay, he would degenerate into a sort of inferiority to the things known, and being dependent on them for his knowledge, he would, so far, be less noble than they. The divine understanding would, like ours, be occasionally in a state of suspense and fluctuation. God might be said to possess rather the power or capability of knowing, than knowledge itself. He would only be disposed to know either this or that indifferently as the thing might turn, and would be actuated and determined by agencies and causalities extraneous to himself. And thus he would neither be the highest nor the first. For these reasons Aristotle and Averroes were right in affirming that the divine knowledge is perfect as it exists in God himself, and neither is nor can be improved by any things that are known. In a similar manner, also, argues Peter Lombard. If the things, says he, which God knows, were the basis of the divine knowledge, it would follow, that creatures contributed to improve their Maker's wisdom; and thus foolish man, or even the meanest beast of the field, would be exalted into an assistant, a counsellor, and a teacher of the all-wise God. Lastly, the testimony of Augustine is very much in point: God, says he, knows all his creatures both corporeal and incorporeal, not because they exist; for he was not ignorant of what he intended to create; but they therefore exist, because he foreknew them. Amidst the innumerable revolutions of advancing and departing ages, the knowledge of God is neither lessened nor augmented. No incident can possibly arise, which THOU, THOU, who knowest all things, didst not expect and foresee; and every created nature is what it is, in consequence of thy knowing it as such.

Neither are we to understand our profound scholar, as though he were contending for the mere ABSTRACT KNOWLEDGE of God as a principle of causation. No: according to him, the efficacy of the divine knowledge depends on the sovereign irresistibility of the divine will. The will of God, says he, in his tenth chapter, is universally efficacious and invincible, and necessitates as a cause.

It cannot be impeded, much less defeated by any means whatever.

The following argument is expressed in terms remarkably concise and nervous.

If you allow, 1. That God is **ABLE** to do a thing, and, 2. That he is **WILLING** to do a thing, then, 3. I affirm **THAT** thing will not, cannot go unaccomplished. God either does it now, or will certainly do it at the destined season, otherwise he must either lose his power or change his mind. He is in want of nothing to carry his purposes into execution. Hence the remark of the philosopher; Si potuit et voluit, egit. He that hath will and power to do a thing, certainly doth that thing. Again, if the will of God may be frustrated, the defeat would arise from the created wills of men or angels; but we can never allow any created will, angelic or human, to be superior to the will of the Creator. Both the divine knowledge and the divine will are altogether unchangeable, since if either one or the other were to undergo an alteration, a change must take place in God himself.

OF PROVIDENCE.

These maxims induced Bradwardine to conclude, that whatever things come to pass, are brought about by the providence of God. Even a prudent master of a family, says he, takes care of every thing that belongs to him, and makes provision beforehand, according to the best of his knowledge and power; and leaves nothing unregulated in his house, but exactly appoints the due time and place for every thing.

OF FATE.

The sentiments of Bradwardine respecting FATE are evidently the result of profound thinking.

Many persons affirm the existence of fate; and many, particularly of the catholic doctors, deny there is any such thing. The Stoics are advocates for fate; on the contrary, Augustine reprobates the idea of it as inconsistent with a sound faith. The truth seems to be this. If by fate is to be understood an inevitable, coercive necessity, arising from the influence of the heavenly bodies, such a notion is not to be maintained: but if the word be taken in a lower sense, as implying, for example, only a disposition, or propensity in men to certain actions, this sentiment with certain explanations may be supported; and most certainly the idea of a divine fate must be admitted, whether we consider the word as derived from *FIAT* or from *FANEO*. Is it not written that in the beginning of the creation God said, fiat lux, let there be light, and there was light? Is it not written again, He spake and it was done? Now this divine

fate is chiefly a branch of the divine will which is the efficacious cause of all things. Augustine was of the same mind. "All that connexion," says he, "and that train of causes, whereby every thing is what it is, are by the Stoics called fate; the whole of which fate is to be ascribed to the will and power of the Supreme Being, who most justly is believed to foreknow all things, and to leave nothing unordained. The energy of the divine will is unconquerably extended through all things..... We never reject that train of causes, wherein the will of God has the grand sway. We avoid however giving it the name of fate; unless indeed you derive the word from *fando*, that is, from *SPEAKING*. For we cannot but acknowledge, that it is written in the Scriptures, God hath *ONCE* spoken, and these two things have I heard, that power belongeth unto God; and that mercy is with thee, for thou wilt render unto every man according to his works. Now when it is said, God hath *SPOKEN ONCE*, the meaning is, that he hath spoken unchangeably, and irreversibly, even as he foreknew all things that should come to pass. The kingdoms of men are absolutely appointed by Divine Providence; which if any one is desirous for that reason to attribute to fate, meaning by that word, the will and power of God, let him hold fast the *SENTIMENT* and only correct the *PHRASE*. Bradwardine concludes his chapter on fate with the following remarkable quotation from Augustine. "But though the Supreme Being is the un doubted origin of every determined train of causes, it by no means follows that nothing is in the power of the human will. For our wills themselves belong to those trains of causes, which are definitively fixed and arranged in the divine mind; and it is in that way that they become the causes of human actions. Our wills have just so much power as God willed and foreknew they should have; and consequently whatever be the precise degree of the power which they possess, that they absolutely must possess, and that they inevitably must exert; for both their powers and their operations were foreknown of God, whose foreknowledge cannot be deceived."

These examples may be sufficient to convey some idea of the acuteness of the reasoning powers of Bradwardine; and the intelligent reader will be at no loss to understand in what manner the conclusions of this celebrated theologian bear upon certain controverted points in divinity, and particularly upon the Pelagian system! Our author closely follows the advocates of that heresy through all their intricate windings; and exposes their antichristian sophisms and subtrefuges with infinite patience and address. Of course his subject leads him to examine and discuss in a very copious manner that most difficult of all inquiries, the nature of the

human will, and of liberty and necessity. Large and instructive extracts might easily be produced on these points from his second book; but as they would detain us too long, it will be more expedient to take our leave of the treatise after having selected a passage or two, which are more of a practical nature, and yet altogether related to the Pelagian dispute.

ON TEMPTATION.

The human will, without a supply of the special assistance of God, cannot conquer so much as a single temptation. And this special assistance, Bradwardine expressly says is not free-will, but the *UNCONQUERABLE* will of God. "Armed with this, his tempted children get the better of every temptation; destitute of this, they are constantly defeated. Besides, if man could overcome temptation by his own power, it would be vain and idle in him to pray to God for victory over it, or to give him thanks for victory obtained."

ON GRACE.

Every creature is indebted to Almighty God for various gifts; and these gifts may with sufficient propriety be called the *grace* of God, grace freely given. But, with very great thankfulness, we ought further to observe, that there is such a thing as a peculiar species of this free grace, which makes a man accepted of God, makes him a friend of God, and dear to him; makes him his child for the present, and a partaker of his glory in heaven. Now, continues he, the mischievous Pelagians maintain that this sort of grace is not given freely by God, but is to be obtained by preceding merits. I myself was once so foolish and empty, when I first applied myself to the study of philosophy, as to be seduced by this error. For whenever I attended to the manner in which the divines handled this point, I own the Pelagian hypothesis appeared to me the more likely to be true. In the schools of the philosophers I rarely heard a single word said concerning grace,—unless indeed sometimes an equivocal expression might drop from the disputants, but nothing farther. Whereas my ears were assailed, the day through, with such assertions as, "We are the masters of our own free actions; it is in our own power to do well or ill, and to have virtues or vices." And when I heard those parts of the scriptures read in the church, which extol the grace of God and lower the free-will of man,—for example, "It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," and many similar passages,—this doctrine of grace was very disagreeable to my ungrateful mind. But afterwards, when I reflected on the nature of the divine character, on the

knowledge of God, and his prescience, I began to perceive some few distant rays of light respecting this matter, even before I became a regular attendant of the lectures in divinity. I seemed to see,—but by no means clearly,—that the grace of God is prior, both in nature and in time, to any good actions that men can possibly perform; and I return thanks to God, from whom proceeds every good thing, for thus freely enlightening my understanding. St. Augustine confesses that he himself had been formerly in a similar mistake. “I was once,” says he, “a Pelagian in my principles. I thought that faith towards God was not the gift of God, but that we procured it by our own powers, and that then, through the use of it, we obtained the gifts of God; I never supposed that the preventing grace of God was the proper cause of our faith, till my mind was struck in a particular manner by the apostle’s argument and testimony,—What hast thou that thou hast not received, and if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? My mind had been puffed up with worldly books, worldly wisdom, and worldly knowledge; but after that my heart was visited with the influences of divine grace, I grasped with the greatest eagerness the sacred writings which were dictated by the Holy Spirit; and above the rest, those of the apostle Paul. Then fell to the ground all my objections, and all the apparent contradictions in the Scriptures. The bible spoke to my mind one simple language of pure truth, and with this additional praise of divine grace constantly inculcated,—that no man should glory as though he had not received.”—Bradwardine then proceeds to say,

In this whole business I follow the steps of Augustine as closely as I can, for he alone appears to me to be both the true apostolic logician and philosopher; and certainly he is very different from many learned doctors.—The great point to be maintained is, that God gives his grace *rarely* in the strictest sense of the word, and without merit on the part of man. For if God did not bestow his grace in this perfectly gratuitous manner, but on account of some subordinate contingent uncertain cause, he could not possibly foresee how he should bestow his free gifts. The word grace evidently implies that there is no antecedent merit: And in this way the apostle to the Romans appears to argue: when he says, “And if by grace then it is no more of works. Otherwise grace is no more grace. Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” All this is perfectly intelligible even in the conduct of liberal and magnificent HUMAN characters. They frequently bestow their gifts from a pure spirit of liberality without the smallest previous claim on the score

of merit. And shall not God, whose perfections are infinite, do more than this? St. Paul says, that God commended his love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us:—And that when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. St. Paul was in a peculiar manner a child of grace: with gratitude therefore he honours and extols its efficacy in all his epistles; and particularly in his epistle to the Romans throughout he defends his doctrines with great precision and copiousness. “Every mouth,” says he, “must be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. By the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified: Men must be justified freely by his grace. By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. . . . Not of works, lest any man should boast.”—Pelagius objects in the following manner; If grace be perfectly free, and if all men be alike, why is grace given to this man and not to that? Augustine, on a similar occasion, exposes the wildness of such reasoning thus: You might as well say, “I am a man; Christ was a man; why am not I the same as He? We have a common nature; and with God there is no respect of persons; why then are his gifts so different? Would any Christian, say would any madman argue so; and yet the principles of Pelagius would carry us this length?”—Again, the Pelagians produce such scriptures as these: “The Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if ye seek him he will be found of you.” “Turn ye,...and I will turn unto you.” From which they would infer, that the grace of God is proportioned to the merits of men. But all this would be to no purpose, if they would but compare one scripture with another: for example, “Turn ye, O God of our salvation;” and after that I was turned, I repented:” And, Turn us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned.” Undoubtedly such expressions as, Turn yourselves, &c. relate to the free power which every man has to WILL; but if Pelagius had half an eye, he might see, that God, in giving the precept which directs us to turn unto him, influences also the human will and excites it to better,—not indeed in opposition to our free choice, but the reverse, as I have all along maintained. Hence it is written, Without me ye can do nothing. And again, I have laboured more abundantly than you all, yet not I but the grace of God within me. And lastly, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean; and I will cleanse you from your idols. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and

1 2 Chron. xv. 2.
2 Psalm lxxxv. 4.
3 Lam. v. 21.

4 Zech. xiv. 3.
5 Jer. xxxi. 13.

I will take away the stony heart, and will give you an heart of flesh.

LOVE, PATIENCE, HUMILITY, AND
THANKSGIVING,

Are the subjects of the thirty-fourth chapter of the second book. And these are handled with great force and eloquence. A short specimen is given in page 588 of this history. It may be worth while to subjoin a few sentences more, for the purpose of shewing how steadily the author keeps his eye on the mischiefs of Pelagianism.

I know, says he, O Lord, I know, and with grief I relate, that there are certain proud Pelagians, who choose rather to trust in themselves than in God. They think that if they have but free-will, and are the sole masters of their own actions, they are sufficiently safe, and have a good foundation for hope. O ye vain children of men, why will ye use a false balance? why will ye trust in yourselves, who are covered with sins, miseries, and defects, rather than in HIM, who is infinitely good and compassionate, and plenteous in his inestimable donations? Why will ye not place your hopes on HIS happy government, who cannot err; and no longer on yourselves, who continually err and stray like lost sheep? Why rely on your own diminutive, infirm, and fragile powers; and not on his Almighty help, whose strength is boundless and irresistible? Beware of the prophet's curse. "Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man, that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." "I am astonished," says St. Augustine, "that, notwithstanding the Apostle declares, it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure, men can choose rather to rely on their own debility than on the strength of the divine promise. But you will tell me, that in regard to myself, the divine promise is altogether uncertain. Be it so: What then? Can you depend upon your own will so as to be assured of your future salvation? What.—Have you no fears on that head? Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. Since then there may be uncertainty in either way, why not place your faith, hope, and charity, where there is stability and good ground for dependance? Strange doctrine of the Pelagians! Tell men, say they, of the greatness of their own natural powers, and such preaching will excite them to virtue; but when you inform them that nothing is to be done without the compassion, the help, and the grace, of God, you break their spirits and drive them to despair. Thus have they that confidence in their own insignificant powers, which all holy men have in the boundless mercy of God; and thus do the former declare war against those very

free gifts of God, by the assistance of which, the latter successfully fight against their innumerable corruptions. . . . O Pelagians, how is it that ye, who fancy yourselves so acute, do not see the dilemma into which your opinions necessarily bring you. Either you rob the Almighty of his prescience, or if you admit that attribute, ye must at the same time admit the conclusiveness of this reasoning. You desire to have ground for hope; it is my prayer that you should—but let your hope be in the Lord. For my part, it is good for me to draw near to God, and to put my trust in the Lord God. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is." It is this perfect confidence in God, which fortifies the mind of a good man against every species of adversity. He knows that God is most wise, just, and compassionate, and that he never falls into error; and he knows also that all things work together for good to them that love God. He learns therefore, with the apostles and many other holy men, even to rejoice in sufferings.

A genuine love of God requires us to employ every faculty we possess, mental and corporeal, for the praise, honour, and glory of God; moreover, we ought freely to submit to every inconvenience and disadvantage, even to the irrecoverable loss of ourselves, rather than offend his Divine Majesty in the slightest degree.

Grant, I beseech thee, good Lord, that as I thus pronounce my duty with my lips, I may efficaciously perform the same, and persevere unto the end: and do Thou, I humbly beg, of thy great compassion, deign to accept this bounden service which thou hast prepared me to perform, as being the only recompence I can possibly make. More than this I neither have, nor ever shall have;—unless, perhaps, it may be thought more,—most earnestly to wish both to know and to do, under all circumstances, what is altogether agreeable to THY WILL. Grant that THIS also may be my heart's desire; and I humbly ask these things, as a poor, miserable, mendicant sinner. Is there any thing further than this for which I can ask? I do not see that there is, though I turn my thoughts every way: but if there be, I entreat thee, O Lord, with the most devout supplication, to answer my prayer in this respect also; that so, for thy unspeakable benefits bestowed freely upon me, I may make the most grateful return in my power, and manifest the feelings of my heart by incessant thanksgiving.

St. Augustine, one of thy most grateful children observes,—That whether we would use our minds in contemplation,—or our mouths in speaking,—or our pens in writing, we cannot be better employed than in giving thanks to God. It is not easy to produce a sentiment more concise in the ex-

passion, more pleasant to the ear, more grateful to the understanding, or more useful in practice. The same author was, no doubt, taught by Thee to say,—That there is true wisdom in the worship of God, which very materially consists in gratitude. Hence we are particularly admonished in the communion service “to give thanks to our Lord God.” Let us therefore humbly acknowledge that every good thing we possess is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights; and with our whole heart let us give thanks to our Lord God continually.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN WICKLIFF.

THIS renowned reformer was first heard of at Merton College in Oxford, one of the most famous seminaries of learning in that age. Even Walden, his enemy, owns, that he was astonished at the strength of the argumentation, and the copiousness of the authorities, which he adduced to support his opinions. The latter end of the fourteenth century was, indeed, so overloaded with absurdities, that it was no very difficult matter, for a person of far less learning and ability than Wickliff, to confound the supporters of the hierarchy in reasoning.

He began to flourish about the year 1371, while Edward III. still reigned in England.¹ He preached on Sundays against the vices of the friars, and the prevailing abuses in religion, particularly against the real presence in the Eucharist. In this point Wickliff has been considered as remarkably clear. Let the reader judge for himself, from the reformer's own expressions in a treatise, which among other things, contains also his accusations of the mendicants.² A short view of that treatise shall be given hereafter. We are informed, indeed, that he preached against purgatory.³ But I much question the truth of this assertion, because, from his own writings, he by no means appears to have been clearly decided against that abomination of popery.

His labours on the other days in the week corresponded to those on the Lord's Day. The schools were then in high repute.⁴ Aristotelian logic was at its height;

and Wickliff made use of the same weapons to oppose error, which his adversaries employed to maintain it.

He was removed from his office of prior or warden of Canterbury College in Oxford, with circumstances of great injustice, about the year 1367. The pope, in the year 1370, confirmed the sentence of his removal, which was not, indeed, to be wondered at, because the dignity and interest of the monastic orders were intimately connected with the question of Wickliff's right to hold his office. But it will be needless, on this head, to trouble the reader with an account of particulars. A judicious and circumstantial writer, whom I have frequently consulted in these memoirs, apprehends, that Wickliff was probably heated both against the pope and the monks⁵ by a resentful sense of the ill treatment he had met with on this occasion. And it is, no doubt, true, that where men are wholly devoid of divine grace, personal injuries not only sink deep into the mind, but frequently also are apt to predominate without controul throughout all the conduct. But there want not evidences, that, in Wickliff, a better spirit was the ground of his opposition to the fashionable abuses. He protested openly in the schools,⁶ that his principal design was to recover the Church from idolatry, especially in regard to the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. Hence he raised against himself a storm of persecution; and was, about the year 1377, cited to appear before Sudbury archbishop of Canterbury, and Courtney bishop of London, on a day fixed at St. Paul's. Wickliff obeyed the citation, and went accompanied by John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and Henry Percy, lord marshal of England. The former of these noblemen was the son of king Edward III. and at that time, his father's faculties being much impaired, the most powerful personage in England. He was a very spirited patron of

account of his work of sentences, which appeared in 1172: it preserved its credit nearly one hundred years.

The middle may be reckoned to commence early in the thirteenth century, under Albertus Magnus, a learned Dominican, who published twenty-one volumes in folio at Lyons. These contain chiefly long commentaries on Aristotle; and though they treat every thing in a logical way, are of little real use, but to fill large libraries. The famous Thomas Aquinas was the disciple of Albertus, and read lectures on the book of sentences. During this period the Peripatetic philosophy was raised to its utmost reputation. The works of Aquinas have gone through several editions, in 17 volumes, folio. The author died in 1274.

The new, or third, age of school-divinity begins with Durandus de St. Pourcain, who wrote commentaries on the four books of sentences, combated the opinions of Thomas Aquinas, and is said to have displayed great wit and genius. Indeed after the time of Aquinas the scholastic disputes grew more and more subtle, and the whole attention of the disputants were employed on the most frivolous questions. They often contended with great heat about mere formalities, and even raised phantoms in their imaginations for the purpose of confounding disputes, and opposition of sentiment. Durandus died bishop of Meaux in 1353.—School divinity is now fallen into the lowest contempt.

¹ Collier, p. 582.

² Fox, Vol. I. 435.

¹ Fox, Vol. I. p. 464. Fuller's Church Hist. B. IV. p. 150.

² This was printed from two old manuscripts, one in Bonet's College, Cambridge, the other in the Public Library at Oxford. — Fuller.

³ The scholastic divinity pretended to discuss and settle all questions in theology in a rational and argumentative manner. Like Plato's school, it has had several ages or periods: the ANCIENT, the MIDDLE, and the NEW.

⁴ The ancient began under Laughran, archbishop of Canterbury, or rather under Abelard, and his disciple Peter Lombard, called the master of the sentences, on

Wickliff, and had conceived a great dislike against the prelates. His conduct and that of lord Percy in the council added no real honour to the cause of Wickliff. They treated the bishop of London in so insolent a manner, that the court broke up in confusion; and it would have given real pleasure to a lover of Christian reformation, if he could have discovered any proof, that Wickliff had protested against the disorderly conduct of his patrons; but this does not appear. It is no more than historical justice to say, that the behaviour of the archbishop and of the bishop seems to have been more unexceptionable than that of Wickliff or of his friends, in this transaction. The opinions, for which Wickliff was censured, were, as they are stated by Walsingham, a writer who strongly supports the cause of popery, "that the church of Rome was not the head of other churches, that St. Peter was not superior to the other apostles, and that the pope, in the power of the keys, was only equal to a common priest." These were undoubtedly the sentiments of genuine Protestantism. What he further asserted, namely, that temporal lords and patrons had a right to dis seize the church of her endowments, in case of misbehaviour, was a sentiment at least expressed in too indefinite a manner; but, that John of Gaunt should eagerly support it, is what might be expected from his turbulent and violent character.

Wickliff, having escaped the persecution of the Hierarchy, in the manner that has been mentioned, continued to preach to the people, during the minority of king Richard II. who was crowned in the year 1377. In the mean time certain articles,—in substance, those, which have been laid before the reader,*—were collected against him: and Sudbury, the archbishop of Canterbury, enjoined the reformer to be silent, and no more to handle such topics. The patronage, however, of the duke of Lancaster, for a time was stronger than the ecclesiastical inhibitions; till repeated mandates from the pope emboldened the bishops a second time to cite the innovator before them at Lambeth; and he was again protected by the civil power, though he was obliged to explain and qualify the meaning of some of his positions. Whether he acted in this matter with the simplicity and integrity of a Christian, the reader must judge for himself from the few instances which follow.

One of his conclusions, as they were called, exhibited in the convocation of the bishops held at Lambeth, was this: "All the race of mankind here on earth, except Christ, have no power simply to ordain, that St. Peter and his successors should politically rule over the Church for ever." His explanation before the assembly was to this ef-

fect. "This conclusion is self-evident; inasmuch as it is not in man's power to stop the coming of Christ to judge the quick and the dead."—It seems natural to infer from the conclusion itself, that Wickliff meant to assert the right of mankind to subvert the political authority of the pope. A bold assertion! but, at the same time, an inestimable truth, because the papal power was founded in usurpation. But the explanation of the conclusion renders it equivocal, if not altogether nugatory.

Again, "There is no example of Christ, which giveth power to his disciples to excommunicate any subject, especially for denying clerical claims of temporalities; but the contrary." This is a part of Wickliff's doctrine, which undoubtedly was levelled at the right of the clergy to possess any kind of property; and was intended to be applied to the purpose of setting that right aside. He takes care, however, in his explanation to avoid the direct assertion of his real sentiment by saying only, "This is declared in that doctrinal principle, taught in scripture, according to which we believe that God is to be loved above all things; and our neighbour and enemy are to be loved above all temporal goods: for the law of God cannot be contrary to itself."

Further: "Whether the pope, or temporal lords, or any other persons, shall have endowed the church with temporalities, it is lawful for them to take away the same temporalities, as it were, by way of medicine to prevent sin, notwithstanding any excommunication, because they are not given but under a condition."

"The truth of this," says he,—in his explanation,—is evident; because nothing ought to hinder a man from performing the principal works of charity.—Yet, God forbid, that by these words occasion should be given to the Lords temporal to take away the goods of the Church."

I need make no remark on this conclusion and its explanation. The next head I shall mention may be reduced to the same class of sentiments; and seems to shew the inconsistency, which I am exposing, in a still more glaring manner.

"If there be a God, the temporal lords may lawfully and meritoriously take away the riches of the church, when the clergy offend habitually."

Any one, who observes the manner in which Wickliff here speaks of the right of the church to worldly possessions, and compares it with his other declarations of the same kind, will not easily perceive on what ground he suffered ecclesiastical property to rest at all. But if he was sincere in the following explanation of this conclusion, the terms of it must appear perfectly insignificant,^a and

* Collier, p. 364.

^a Fox, p. 491.

he may seem to have expressed in very equivocal and dangerous language, a tenet in itself perfectly harmless. "If," says he, "there be a God, he is omnipotent; if so, he can command the lords temporal thus to act; and if he may thus command, they may lawfully take away such goods. But God forbid, that any should believe my intention to have been, that secular lords may lawfully take away whatsoever goods they please by their own naked authority: only by the authority of the Church they may do so, in cases and in form limited by the laws."

But candour and consistency oblige me to observe, that, there appear, especially in this last case, such sophistical methods of argument, and such evasive modes of speech, as are very incompatible with the character of a reformer. In some of the English manuscripts of Wickliff, the pope is called the insolent priest of Rome, Antichristian, robber, &c.; but nothing of this sort of language is found in his explanations^b of his tenets. I am much inclined to believe the account of l'Enfant in these transactions, because he is an author in general extremely accurate and judicious; and also, because nothing is more natural than for a man, who, in the confidence of great political support, had carried his ideas of external reformation to an unwarrantable length, and had exhibited too much of a military spirit, on finding himself deprived of that support, to sink into a timidity, which might be productive of artifice and dissimulation. In his work entitled, "The great Sentence of Excommunication explained," the following passage appears,— "When shall we see the proud priest of Rome, grant plenary indulgences to engage men to live in peace and charity, as he does to engage Christians to murder each other?" A severe but just reproof! and abundantly verified in this History of the Church of Christ. But such boldness and severity of censure, ought to be accompanied with the spirit of martyrdom. In this Wickliff was deficient. It will appear hereafter from the history of the council of Constance, and also from some extracts of this reformer's own writings, that he expressly condemned all ecclesiastical property whatever. Yet he himself enjoyed tithes, and possessed the living of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, to his death.^c

From a concise account, of the writings and public lectures of Wickliff, with which we purpose to gratify the reader,^d it will also distinctly appear, in what manner he combatted the doctrine of transubstantiation.

At the end of one of his English confessions of the sacrament of the Altar, he declared, that one third of the clergy were on his side, and would support him at the hazard of their lives. He was, however, condemned by the University for holding heretical opinions in this matter; and, from the Chancellor's decree,* Wickliff's Confessions, and other documents, a judgment may, in some measure, be formed what those opinions really were.—Our reformer has been charged with retracting and explaining his meaning, in an artful manner after he had appealed to the secular arm in vain; but here again the reader must determine for himself how far the accusation is well founded. It is certain that his powerful patron, the duke of Lancaster, deserted him on this occasion, and advised him to submit to his natural judges; influenced, it is said, by his dread of the strength of the hierarchy, as well as by scruples of conscience.

Whoever carefully examines the original records, will be convinced that the merits of this reformer have been considerably exaggerated. His inconsistencies may indeed be palliated, and in part excused. I am apt to believe also, that in his latter days he thought more moderately, and altered some of his wild and irregular notions concerning property: besides, there are such undoubted proofs of his laborious and indefatigable cares in religion, and of his sound comprehension of the essentials of Christianity, and of his general probity, integrity, and innocence of life, that I should be extremely sorry, if, in any one instance, he may reasonably be suspected of deliberate hypocrisy. That he sought divine truth, and seriously endeavoured both to teach and to practise it, the general tenor of his life evinces; the testimony also of the best and most upright men who lived nearest his times, is unequivocal in his favour. The great benefit likewise resulting from his labours, both in England and Bohemia, seems to show that God honoured him with evangelical fruitfulness, though it must be owned, that many of his disciples appear on the whole to have been better Christians than himself. That he was really pious can hardly be doubted; and one point of instruction may in some measure compensate the pain which every lover of truth must feel at the discovery of his inconsistencies. It is this: Let serious divines cease to immerse themselves in political concerns: Politics was the rock on which this great and good man split, and in his case it clearly appeared, that the work of God is not to be carried on by "the arm of flesh."

To proceed: Wickliff was now delivered from persecution; and was still supported,

^b l'Enfant's Hist. of Constance.

^c It is not to be wondered at, that he, who maintained, "that tithes were mere alms," should be accused of supporting the seditious practices of Tyler, Straw, and the other incendiaries in the time of Richard II. There is no clear evidence, however, that Wickliff ever persecuted these men.

^d Page 508 of this Volume.

^e P. 599 of this Volume.

in some degree, by the secular power and by individuals of distinction, though induced, as the price of that protection to make such sacrifices as are inconsistent with a direct and open sincerity. After this time, he had no trouble from his superiors, at least none that deserves any particular detail, though he certainly continued to the end of his days, in the unremitted exercise of zealous pastoral labours in his parish church of Lutterworth, though he persevered in attacking the abuses of popery by his writings against the mendicants, against transubstantiation, and against indulgences; and though he produced a translation of the bible from the Latin into the English tongue.—This work alone sufficed to render his name immortal. The value of it was unspeakable; and his unwearied pains to propagate the genuine doctrines of Revelation among mankind indicated the steady zeal with which he was endowed; while the rage, with which the hierarchy was inflamed against a work so undeniably seasonable, demonstrated, that the ecclesiastical rulers hated the light, and would not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd.^f

I know no person of ecclesiastical eminence, whose life and character have cost me more thought and care, than Wickliff's. And after all, there is not much to record that deserves the peculiar attention of godly persons. I have consulted the best authorities, and in scrutinizing their contents have been mortified to find, that I could not conscientiously join with the popular cry in ranking this man among the highest worthies of the church. A political spirit, as we have seen, deeply infected his conduct.—It nevertheless remains true, that sincere Christians; and more particularly the protestants of all succeeding ages, are bound thankfully to acknowledge the divine goodness, for that there actually existed in the personal character of Wickliff "some good thing toward the Lord,"^g that such a character was providentially raised up at the very time it was so much wanted, and, that from his labours considerable benefit accrued to the church of Christ, both in England and upon the continent.^h

Wickliff, died in peace at Lutterworth, of the palsy, in the year 1387. In the year 1410, his works were burned at Oxford; and in 1428, his remains were dug out of his grave and burned, and his ashes thrown into the river of Lutterworth. The number of his volumes committed to the flames by order of Subينو,ⁱ archbishop of Prague, amounted to about two hundred. His labours indeed appear to have been immense; and beyond

all doubt, he was in that dark age a prodigy of knowledge.

After having observed that his works were burned at Oxford, it is proper to add, that previous both to this, and also to the burning of his bones by order of the council of Constance, a testimonial was publicly given, by the university of Oxford, to his character, dated in the year 1406, which declares,^j "That all his conduct through life was sincere and commendable, that his conversation from his youth upward, to the time of his death, was so praise-worthy and honest, that never at any time was there a particle of suspicion raised against him, and that he vanquished, by the force of the scriptures, all such as slandered Christ's religion. God forbid that our prelates should condemn such a man as an heretic, who has written better than any others in the university, on logic, philosophy, divinity, morality, and the speculative arts." This honourable testimony shews, that the speculative errors of Wickliff, were not attended with practical consequences; and that sedition in church and state, was never meant to be encouraged by that reformer, though the enormities of the age induced him much to exceed the bounds of discretion in his attempts to oppose them.

The distinguishing tenet of Wickliff in religion was, undoubtedly, the election of grace. He calls the church an assembly of predestinated persons. To those, who said that God did not every thing for them, but that their own merits contributed in part to salvation, he replied with a short prayer, "Heal us gratis, O Lord." Those, who have diligently studied the sacred volumes, and also the writings of truly pious Christians, will understand, how evangelically humble this reformer might be in the use of such doctrine, and at the same time, how sincerely laborious in inculcating whatever belongs to genuine piety and virtue, in opposition to the pharisaic superstitions of the times. And if any one be inclined to doubt this, let him consider that the eleventh article of our own church says, that we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Saviour, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings; and yet no sound divine conceives that; for this reason, any man is released from the duty of obeying God's commandments, and of abounding in all the fruits of a pure and evangelical faith.^k But

^f *Ib.* p. 515.

^g Persons of an Arminian way of thinking, are very apt to consider all Calvinistic doctrine as of an Antinomian tendency; and on the contrary, the Calvinist too frequently reproaches the Arminian for being of a legal spirit, and for denying the free and unmerited salvation of men by Jesus Christ.—NEITHER PARTY SHOULD BE PRESSED WITH CONSEQUENCES WHICH THEY THEMSELVES DISAVOW. The writer of this history is often called upon to form the best estimate he can of religious characters; and for this purpose, the observance of the

^f John iii. ver. 20.

^g 1 Kings xiv. 13.

^h A Bohemian Gentleman, who studied at Oxford, carried Wickliff's books into Bohemia.

ⁱ Fox, p. 509.

let us proceed to give a brief sketch of his doctrines, as extracted from his writings and other authentic documents.

In one of his treatises against the mendicant friars, called "The complaint of John Wickliff to the king and parliament," he says,¹ "If ministers, in the execution of their office, do not act, both by word and example, as God commandeth, their people are not bound to pay them tithes and offerings."

"When the principal cause for which tithes and offerings should be paid does not exist, the payment of tithes should cease. Also clergymen are more to be condemned for withdrawing their teaching in word and in example, than the parishioners are for withdrawing tithes and offerings, even though they discharge their office as they ought."

This last observation presents us with an absurd comparison between two species of transgression; and we need not wonder if the doctrine of the whole passage should have often influenced the conduct of misers and extortioners.

In the sixteenth chapter of another treatise against the orders of friars, he directly charges them with perverting the right faith of the sacrament of the altar. "Christ says, that the bread, which he brake and blessed, is his body; and the Scripture says openly, that the sacrament is bread that we break and God's body: but they say, 'it is an accident without subject,' and therefore nothing; neither bread, nor God's body. Augustine says, 'what we see, is bread, but to those, who are faithfully taught, the bread is Christ's body.'—Why should our Almighty Saviour conceal this notion of the friars for a thousand years; and never teach the doctrine to his apostles, or to so many saints, but at length communicate it to these hypocrites?"

In his public lectures, which he read, as professor of divinity at Oxford in the summer of 1381,² Wickliff appears to have opposed the papistical doctrine of transubstantiation with all his might; and at the same time to have maintained the true, ancient and scriptural, notion of the Lord's supper.—With this view he published sixteen conclusions, the first of which is expressed in these words, "The consecrated host, which we see upon the altar is neither Christ nor any part of him, but an effectual sign of him."—And he offered to defend this and his other conclusions in public disputation with any

one. But he was prohibited by the rulers of the university and doctors of divinity. Upon which Wickliff published a defence³ of his doctrine, which the intelligent reader will think less satisfactory than the above mentioned conclusion.—"The Eucharist," says he, "is the body of Christ in the form of bread. The right faith of Christian men is this, that this worshipful sacrament is bread and Christ's body, as Jesus Christ is very God and very man."

In his Trialog,⁴ he observes, "that though the bread in the eucharist begins to be the body of Christ, by virtue of the consecration, it must not be believed that it ceases to be bread. It is plain it is SUBSTANTIALLY bread, because it begins to be SACRAMENTALLY the body of Christ. So Christ says, This is my body.—The nature of bread is not thenceforth destroyed, but is exalted into a substance of greater dignity.—In a similar way the BAPTIST was made Elias, by virtue of Christ's words in the eleventh of St Matthew, yet he did not cease to be John.—And St. Austin observes, that the scripture does not say that seven ears of corn and seven fat kine signify seven years of plenty, but that they ARE those years. Such expressions denote that the subject is ordained of God to FIGURE the thing predicated according to its fitness.—And in the same sense and manner the sacramental bread is specially the body of Christ."—Wickliff very modestly concludes this explanation, with declaring, "that he was ready to believe a more subtle sense, if he could be convinced of the truth of it by scripture or reason."

We have observed above that Wickliff, in the matter of transubstantiation, appears both to have opposed the papistical doctrine, and also to have maintained the true. But the discerning reader cannot fail to remark, that authentic documents leave the former proposition in much less doubt than they do the latter.

The chancellor of the university of Oxford after reciting, before several doctors in divinity, the reformer's conclusions, namely first, That in the sacrament the substance of the material bread and wine remain the same after consecration; and secondly, That in that venerable sacrament the body and blood of Christ are not present essentially, but only figuratively, with their consent decreed that "These are execrable errors, and repugnant to the determinations of the Church."⁵

From this decree of the chancellor, Wickliff appealed to the king.—But the duke of Lancaster,⁶ who had countenanced his opposition to papal usurpation, did not approve his heretical sentiments respecting the re-

rule just mentioned, is of the utmost consequence. It is not his province to enter into the discussion of nice theological or metaphysical questions.

¹ Page 15. N. B. Though several of the quotations which follow are marked with inverted commas, for the sake of distinction, they are to be understood as only containing the substance of Wickliff's sentiments, and not his very words.—The originals are frequently in Latin, and often in such antiquated English as would be unintelligible to ordinary readers.

= Hist. and Antiq. Oxon. A. D. 1381.

= MS. on a feigned contemplative life.

² Lib. IV. cap. 4.

³ Speelman. Vol. II.

⁴ Walsingham. Hist. Angliæ. and Antiq. Oxon.

ceived doctrine of the real presence; and is said to have enjoined silence to this bold innovator on that head.—Soon after this, Wickliff published a long, obscure, and equivocal sort of confession, which by his enemies has been termed a retraction of his sentiments. In this confession he declares his belief in the following terms. "The same body of Christ which was incarnate of the virgin, which suffered on the cross, which lay three days in the grave, and rose again on the third day,—this same body and same substance is verily and really the sacramental bread or consecrated host, which we see in the hands of the priest." But he presently adds, "That he dare not say that the body of Christ, considered as an EXTENDED BODY, is essentially and substantially the bread: There is a threefold manner of the body of Christ being in the consecrated host, viz. a virtual, spiritual, and sacramental."—And so in his *Triologus* he says, "this sacrament is the body of Christ; and not only that which shall be, or which figures sacramentally the body of Christ." And again, "That the host is to be adored principally for this reason, not because it is in some respect the body of Christ, but because it contains in a secret manner the body of Christ within itself."—He is very constant in asserting, "That the bread, by the words of consecration, is not made the Lord's glorified body, or his spiritual body, which is risen from the dead, nor his fleshy body as it was before he suffered death; but that the bread still continues bread; and so there is bread and the body of Christ together."—

Some of Wickliff's admirers, who can see no defects in their favourite, would explain the contradictions, and obscurities, which are to be found in his various writings and confessions on the subject of transubstantiation, by affirming, that he discovered the truth gradually, and that he was late in fixing his opinions on the Lord's supper. And if this could be made out, it would doubtless, be a very natural and a very satisfactory defence of the reformer;—but let us attend to the sentiments of a very great man, whose extensive learning, and extraordinary candour, were never called in question.—"I have looked," says Melancthon, "into Wickliff, who is very confused in this controversy of the Lord's supper; but I have found in him, also, many other errors, by which a judgment may be made of his spirit. He neither understood nor believed the righteousness of faith. He foolishly confounds the gospel and politics; and does not see that the gospel allows us to make use of the lawful forms of government of all nations. He contends, that it is not lawful for priests to have any

property.—He wrangles sophistically and downright seditiously about civil dominion. In the same manner he cavils sophistically against the received opinion of the Lord's supper."—

The most important Latin performance of Wickliff, seems to be his *Triologus*, from which several passages have already been quoted for the purpose of elucidating the author's sentiments on the doctrine of transubstantiation.

This brilliant work was answered by WIDEMONT, a Franciscan, who dedicated his laboured reply to archbishop Arundel. L'Enfant tells us, in his history of the council of Constance, that he found a copy of the *Triologus* in the university of Frankfort on the Oder.—It contains a dialogue between three speakers, whom the author calls, Truth, Falsehood, and Wisdom.—With what vehemence he opposed the fashionable abuses may be collected from a single sentence respecting the crime of simony. "Those stupid simonists imagine that grace may be bought and sold like an ox or an ass." And speaking of the invocation of saints, he observes, "The festival of the day is to no purpose, if it do not tend to magnify Jesus Christ, and induce men to love HIM. Moreover, our Redeemer Jesus Christ is very God, as well as very man, and therefore, on account of his divinity, he must infinitely exceed any other man. And this consideration induces many to think that it would be expedient to worship no other being among men except Jesus Christ; inasmuch as he is the best Mediator and best Intercessor; and they likewise think, that when this was the practice of the Church, it increased and prospered much better than it does now. What folly then to apply to any other person to be our Intercessor? What folly to choose of two persons proposed, the less eligible of the two, to be our intercessor: Would any one choose the king's buffoon to be an intercessor? The saints in heaven are not indeed buffoons; but in dignity they are less, compared with Jesus Christ, than a buffoon is, when compared with an earthly king."—

He is very pointed in asserting the authority of scripture, which, he maintains, infinitely surpasses the authority of any other writings whatsoever; and he declares, that to hold the contrary, is the most damnable of all heresies. He assures us, that he so strenuously combatted, in the university and before the people, the errors on the sacrament, because none had proved more destructive to mankind. "These errors," says he, "fleece men and draw them into idolatry: They then deny the faith of the scriptures; and by their infidelity provoke the God of truth."—Such were the principles of Wickliff, and such the testimonies which

* Wickliff's Confession.

• See Wickliff's *Wicket* and *Triolog.* lib. IV.

• *Sententie veterum de carne Domini.*

he has left against the corruptions of the church of Rome.

There is preserved in the library of the cathedral of York, an *Apology* for Wickliff, written by Dr. Thomas James, keeper of the public library at Oxford, for the purpose of shewing this great reformer's conformity with the present church of England. The contents of the *Apology* are collected chiefly from Wickliff's own manuscripts. I shall present the reader with a few quotations.

Speaking of the scriptures, Wickliff says, "I think it absurd to be warm in defence of the apocryphal books, when we have so many which are undeniably authentic. In order to distinguish canonical books from such as are apocryphal, use the following rules; 1. Look into the New Testament, and see what books of the Old Testament are therein cited and authenticated by the Holy Ghost. 2. Consider whether the like doctrine be delivered by the Holy Ghost elsewhere in the scripture."—These observations to us, no doubt, appear extremely obvious, and no more than plain, common sense: but those, who are aware of the dominion of prejudice in the age of Wickliff, and of the implicit obedience then shown to ecclesiastical authority, will be best qualified to appreciate that vigour of understanding, and that resolute integrity, which could produce such sentiments, and a correspondent practical conduct.

Dr. James the compiler tells us, that Wickliff was earnest, every where in his writings, to establish the grand protestant sentiment, of the sufficiency of the scriptures for saving instruction; and that the reason of his earnestness and pious zeal was, in substance, this, "Few sermons were preached in his time; and those few were on fabulous subjects and traditions, and profaned with much scurrility and emptiness. Friars persecuted the faithful, and said, it had never been well with the church since lords and ladies regarded the gospel, and relinquished the manners of their ancestors."

"Some," he says, "are enlightened from above, that they may explain the proper, literal, and historical, sense of scripture, in which sense all things necessary in scripture are contained."

This remark was doubtless made to guard his readers against the devious paths of fantastic and endless allegories, in which the sportive genius of Origen had been so conversant; and which, for ages, had thrown so great a cloud over the genuine meaning of the sacred writers. It was, at the same time, a strong indication of the native vigour of that good sense, with which the pastor of Lutterworth was eminently endowed; and his idea of divine assistance, as necessary to qualify a man for the explanation of the revealed word, indicates his knowledge

of our natural blindness and depravity; and further, in making this last observation, he doubtless, intimates the very great advantage, which, as a religious instructor, a person, who is practically led by the Spirit of God, has over a mere self-sufficient theorist depending on the use of his own understanding. We have indeed, from the extreme disadvantages of obscurity, in which this author's works appear, little opportunity of estimating his merits as a Theologian; but it is sufficiently evident from a few fragments* of his voluminous writings, that, in light and talents, he was greatly superior to his contemporaries; and if he had escaped the snare of that political speculation, which encourages sedition, and makes Christ's kingdom to be of this world, he might have stood among the foremost of those geniuses, who, since the apostolic age, have been raised up by providence to instruct and reform the human race.

"Sanctity of life," he observes, "promotes this ILLUMINATION so necessary for understanding the revealed word;—to continue which in the church is the duty of Theologians, who ought to remain within their proper limits, and not to invent things foreign to the faith of scripture."

He lays down some good rules for an expositor. 1. He should be able by collation of manuscripts to settle well the sacred text. 2. He should be conversant in logic. 3. He should be constantly engaged in comparing one part of scripture with another. 4. The student should be a man of prayer, and his disposition should be upright. 5. He needs the internal instruction of the Primary Teacher." This last is Augustine's favourite idea; namely, that a genuine reliance for divine aid in rightly interpreting and applying scripture is the sure index of an humble spirit; and that the contempt of it no less powerfully indicates the prevalence of profaneness or self-conceit.

The council of Constance condemned this great man for denying the pope's supremacy. We shall afterwards see, that that council is entitled to little regard. What colour they might have for their censure seems to be grounded on his avowed opinion, that all the bishops of Rome before his time for three hundred years had been heretics: and yet he advances, that whoever disobeys the papal mandates, incurs the charge of paganism." By comparing these two passages together, it seems that he was willing to own the supremacy of that See, provided it was filled by a faithful pastor.

* Subinco, archbishop of Prague, about the year 1400, endeavoured to collect all the writings of Wickliff, which had been introduced into Bohemia. He is said to have gotten into his possession 200 of them, all which he burned by virtue of a royal edict. *Generalius Historica Narratio*, p. 32.

* *Apology*, Chap. on the pope, sect. 1.

Further, in Dr. James's collection, there are also extracts and observations, in substance, as follows.

"The merit of Christ is of itself sufficient to redeem every man from hell. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for salvation; and without faith it is impossible to please God."

And the writer informs us, that, on the leading controversy respecting justification, Wickliff accorded fully with the church of England; and that he persuaded men "to trust wholly to Christ, to rely altogether upon his sufferings, and not to seek to be justified in any other way than by his justice:" that he said, "Unbelievers, though they might perform works apparently good in their matter, still were not to be accounted righteous men; that all who followed Christ, became righteous through the participation of his righteousness, and would be saved." He adds the following sentences. "Human nature is wholly at enmity with God: All men are originally sinners, not only from their mother's wombs, but in their mother's wombs: We cannot think a good thought unless Jesus send it: We cannot perform a good work unless it be properly his good work: His mercy prevents us so that we receive grace; and it follows us so as to help us and keep us in grace. Heal us, good Lord, we have no merit! Give us grace to know that all thy gifts be of the goodness only."¹

I recommend these hints to the particular notice of such serious readers as set a high value on the essential truths of the Gospel. They will draw their own conclusions from them. In regard to myself, I have been much mortified to find so little recorded from Wickliff's writings respecting these truths, even by his most diligent biographers. Two of these, very great admirers of this reformer, either did not comprehend the great doctrines of justification by faith, and of the nature of good works, or, they must have thought them of little consequence. On all other points they dwell with sufficient accuracy, and with a minuteness of detail; whereas if they touch on these at all, it is done with the greatest reserve; and the little they say is far from being clear.—Yet both of the authors to whom I allude, shew that they were well aware of the above-mentioned censure of Wickliff by Melancthon; ² for one of them has given a very unsatisfactory answer to the charge; and the other appears to me to have evaded the question, and to have presented his reader with a very imperfect view of Wickliff's sentiments on a most important point. He barely says, "Wickliff asserted the necessity of divine grace. Without this, he saw not how a human being could make him-

self acceptable to God." Every admirer of Wickliff, if he also be a sincere approver of the estimable protestant doctrines concerning the grace of God and of the justification of man, will be gratified in reading the sentiments I have produced from Dr. James's collection. If such sentiments abound not in Wickliff's writings so much as sound and enlightened Christians might wish, it becomes the more necessary to take notice of those which we do find there. At least the plan of this history, which professes to search everywhere for the real Church of Christ, rendered these remarks indispensably necessary.

The apology by Dr. James contains many other memorable sentiments of this reformer: Among which is this,

"We worship not the image, but the being represented by the image, say the patrons of idolatry in our times. Suffice it to say, idolatrous heathens said the same."

He also vehemently opposed the whole doctrine of indulgences; and expressed in the most decisive manner, his disapprobation of forced vows of celibacy, either in the case of monks or of the secular clergy. He is accused of having been an enemy to all oaths; but the apology proves directly the contrary; also a passage in his book against the mendicant friars, seems to invalidate the charge. "God," says he, "teaches us to swear by himself, when necessity calls for it, and not by his creatures."

It has been thought,—I am well aware,—that the reformers of the sixteenth century built on the foundation, which Wickliff had laid. But his knowledge of christian doctrine, though fundamentally sound, was yet so defective, so obscure, and so scholastical, while that of those admirable reformers, carries such internal marks of originality, of accurate method, and of solid scriptural investigation, that they do not appear to have followed him at all as a guide in theology. We have seen that Melancthon, one of the most judicious and candid of them, thought, that Wickliff understood not the doctrine of the righteousness of faith. It might, perhaps be nearer the truth to say that, in an accurate knowledge of that important article he seems to have been defective. At the same time, however, that his light respecting pure evangelical doctrine was scanty, his views of external reformation erred in the extreme of excess. He disliked ALL Church-endowments, and wished to have the clergy reduced to a state of poverty. He insists that parishioners had a right to withhold tithes from pastors who were guilty of fornication. Now if, in such cases, he would have allowed every individual to have judged for himself, who does not see what a door might be opened to confusion, fraud, and the encouragement of avarice?

¹ De Veritate Script. in Expos. Decal. Comment. in primis.

² See page 599.

In vitium dedit culpa fuga, et cuncta acta. Hic.

Never was this remark of the poet more completely exemplified than in the conduct of Wickliff. An honest indignation on account of the enormities and immense revenues of the clergy in his day, led this extraordinary genius to use rash and indefensible expressions, which his own practice, in regard to his benefice at Lutterworth, seemed to contradict: Hence I am led to conclude, that this good man intended not absolutely, on this subject, the whole of what he uttered in his warmth. Hath the Lord ordained, that they, who "preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel." And have pastors, after all, no right to be maintained by their people? Doubtless, they have not, if it be true, that all which they receive, is properly to be called alms. Or, ought they, whose business it is, to instruct their flocks in their most important and eternal concerns, to be placed in situations not really differing from those of beggars? In such a view, the whole body of the clergy might justly be denominated *MENDICANTS*, the very orders of men, against which Wickliff so copiously inveighed. This whole sentiment of reducing the tithes and offerings conferred on the clergy to alms, however it may flatter the pride and avarice, and profaneness of many of the laity in our days, appears on every account perfectly indefensible. The very nature of alms supposes, that the objects of them are recommended to our regard, not by the services which they perform, but by the distresses which they endure. Is this the proper light in which we should view the character of a christian pastor; or, can this be called in any degree a just representation of the functions of a teacher of the Gospel? And, lastly, are spiritual services of so little estimation, as to claim no reward from those on whom they are conferred?

This great defect in Wickliff's ideas of Church-reformation very much lessened his reputation in the eyes of those reformers, who followed him. Melancthon in particular, a zealous friend of order and decorum, represents him, as we have already seen, to have been, in this respect, destitute of all sobriety of judgment. It is not to be denied, however, that he was a light in his day. There is reason to believe, that many, who were by no means disposed to defend his errors, admired his virtues; and even those, who would describe his lanthorn as dimly scattering only a few obscure rays of evangelical truth, must still confess that it sufficed to discover to mankind the turpitude of the works of darkness, which predominated in England. The inestimable present of the word of God in their own language, with which he was enabled to favour his country-

men, conveyed instruction to great numbers: there was an effusion of the Divine Spirit; and in the next chapter we must attend to its effects.

The reader is now to judge, whether from the historical facts, which have been laid before him, together with the extracts from the writings of Wickliff, the writer of this ecclesiastical history be well founded in the observations, which he has made on the character and opinion of this celebrated reformer. And, though it is much to be regretted, that, in regard to certain parts of his conduct, neither the purity of his motives, nor the clearness of his knowledge can be so ascertained, as entirely to stifle suspicion, or silence objection, yet is our information sufficient to explain several things which appear inconsistent or contradictory as recorded by memorialists and biographers.

For example, 1. We may allow and lament, that in certain difficult and dangerous moments of his life, there existed in the defences and explanations of Wickliff, more equivocation and artifice than are consistent with the simplicity of character which should mark a true disciple and follower of Jesus Christ; but when this defect is admitted, who can deny, that, on the whole, he was a sincere believer of Christianity, and a zealous advocate for its essential doctrines?—Mr. Hume had too much good sense, and was too acute an observer, not to discover in Wickliff this firm belief of the Christian religion, and this fervent love of the great truths, which it teaches; but in order to appreciate justly his remarks on any religious character of this kind, we ought to keep in view the well known prejudices of this otherwise incomparable historian. His dislike of the gospel of Christ is so perfect and complete, that wherever he finds sincerity in believing and zeal in supporting and propagating its fundamentals, these dispositions sink, in his esteem, all such persons without exception; and, in most cases, when the question turns entirely upon religion, we expect in vain from him, not only the candour and moderation of a philosophical critic, but the justice and impartiality of an upright judge.—Mr. Hume's account of Wickliff is as follows.—"He denied the doctrine of the real presence, the supremacy of the Church of Rome, the merit of monastic vows. He maintained, that the scripture was the sole rule of faith; that the Church was dependant on the state, and should be reformed by it; that the clergy ought to possess no estates; that the begging friars were a general nuisance, and ought not to be supported; that the numerous ceremonies of the Church were hurtful to true piety. He asserted, that oaths were unlawful, that domi-

nion was founded in grace, that every thing was subject to fate and destiny, and that all men were pre-ordained either to eternal salvation or reprobation." This same historian also owns, that the doctrines of Wickliff were derived from his search into the scriptures and into ecclesiastical antiquity; and he tells us that they were nearly the same with those which were propagated, by the reformers in the sixteenth century: After such a detail, who would expect the author to conclude with this remarkable sentence? "From the whole of his doctrine, Wickliff appears to have been strongly tinctured with enthusiasm, and to have been thereby better qualified to oppose a church, whose chief characteristic is superstition."—Therefore, according to Mr. Hume's judgment, it was not so much the rational argumentation of Wickliff, or his diligent search into the scriptures, as his enthusiasm, which qualified him to become a formidable adversary of the papal superstitions and corruptions.—If Wickliff had opposed the abominations of the church of Rome by ridicule and banter, by scorn and contempt, by sceptical objections to revelation in general, and by these methods only, he would probably have escaped this censure.

"He was distinguished," Mr. Hume says, "by a great austerity of life and manners;" and the historian then coolly observes, that this is "a circumstance common to almost all those, who DOGMATIZE IN ANY NEW WAY." Infidel philosophers and infidel historians, never comprehend how the honour of God, and the salvation of men can be the ruling principles of a rational conduct. The profession of such principles appear to them to be connected with hypocrisy or enthusiasm: And therefore in estimating the merits of truly religious characters, they make no candid allowance, for the weakness and imperfection of human nature; but are most ingenious and acute in discovering faults and inconsistencies, as well as bitter and sarcastic in exposing them. If, on the one hand, I have been mortified in finding myself constrained to differ from many in their unbounded applause of Dr. Wickliff, I have felt it a duty on the other, to correct the uncandid and injurious representations of a profane historian, who would insinuate to the minds of the unwary, that this reformer, "though a man of parts and learning," was in fact a cautious or cowardly enthusiast.—The defects and inconsistencies, with which, in the former part of this account, I acknowledge the memory of this great man to be considerably stained, afford some handle for the suspicion of timidity or cowardice; but, for the charge of enthusiasm the historian has no warrant whatever.—Moreover, supposing it true, that Wickliff's timid disposition or any other cause, induced him

to decline the praise of martyrdom, is it not at least equally true,—that he involved himself in much danger and difficulty by bringing forward his opinions,—that he shewed much courage and ability in supporting them,—and that, rather than retract them, he suffered heavy persecutions with great patience and fortitude? Did the philosopher Mr. Hume infer the nature of a man's disposition from an occasional imbecility manifested in some trying moments, rather than from the uniform tenour of his conduct? Or did he esteem every man a coward or a hypocrite, who, in explaining his religious sentiments, may, in some instances, have softened them, or perhaps equivocated, for the purpose of saving his life?"

I consider this as ONE very clear and decisive instance of Mr. Hume's prejudice and partiality. There are many others, in his very excellent writings, of a similar kind. He has a very sly and artful way of insinuating his own opinions, and of depreciating truly religious men; and it is not a sufficient guard against this practice, merely to advertise the young student that this is actually the case, and that therefore he must be constantly on the watch.—Clear instances, like this respecting Wickliff, should be produced. It would be very easy to collect a number of a similar sort; and such a collection of particular and distinct examples would be infinitely more efficacious in preventing the daily mischief done by this author's rash assertions, and dangerous insinuations, than numerous pages of GENERAL disapprobation or abuse with which many well-intentioned publications continually abound.—Such general disapprobation or abuse of an author, whose excellencies the student is in the habit of seeing and admiring, is apt to disgust by frequent repetition rather than to be productive of caution.—Shew the student that his favourite historian or philosopher is under the dominion of the most violent prejudices, and that he is capable of misrepresenting notorious facts,—do this, even in one instance only, and the memory of it will sink deep into his mind, and prove salutary in its consequences.

2. But other causes, besides a spirit of opposition to revealed religion, have contributed not a little to render some circumstances in our histories of Wickliff contradictory and inconsistent.—Let a few hints suffice.

This nation had so long groaned under the evils of Popery, that, for many years after the Reformation, it was the custom with ecclesiastical writers of the protestant class, to be continually venting their indignation against papal tyranny and superstition. And though it be very true, that the abominations of the Roman church form so shocking a

• Hume, Rich. II. Chap. 17.

narrative, that our aversion to that antichristian hierarchy can hardly be raised to too high a pitch; nevertheless, the integrity of history may easily have suffered in particular instances through this aversion, however laudable and well-founded the disposition in itself may have been.—Further: an ardent love of freedom, and an unconquerable hatred of slavish doctrines, both in civil and ecclesiastical institutions, are well known to constitute in general, a striking feature of the British character.—Now with these two considerations in view, let it be remembered also, that Wickliff has unquestionably the honour of being the first person in Europe that publicly called in question, by his discourses, sermons and writings, those principles, which had universally passed for certain and undisputed during many ages,—and then, I think, we must cease to wonder, that this reformer's conduct and opinions should have been often exhibited to us in the most glowing terms of veneration and respect; which terms, however, may be expected to vary materially, according as the sentiments of the historian or biographer have more or less of an aristocratic or a popular tendency; and again, according as the writer's views of ecclesiastical government are confined to merely political considerations, or as they extend to the eternal interests of mankind. No apology can be necessary for having freely animadverted upon such a writer as Mr. Hume; but it might be invidious to exemplify the distinctions here alluded to by opposite quotations from authors, whose zeal for liberty, or whose predilection for particular sentiments, appear to me to have carried them unwarrantable lengths in the commendation of Wickliff. The student of ecclesiastical history will, however, do well to recollect, that unless he keeps these and similar distinctions in his mind, and carefully allows for them, he will be much bewildered in his researches.—The bigotted papist usually loses his patience in describing the principles and conduct of Wickliff: The unbeliever, in treating the same subject, sees no difficulties, but what are easily explained on the supposition of enthusiasm, hypocrisy, pride of the human heart, or love of popularity:—Moderate divines, even of the Roman catholic persuasion, support Wickliff to a certain point, particularly in his attack of the abuses, which interfered with their own interests and privileges: Protestant divines may be expected to defend the reformer much further:—And, in fact, those protestants, who are usually denominated low churchmen, have shewn themselves disposed to transmit his memory to posterity with the most exalted encomiums.—His manly freedom in inquiring after truth, and his great boldness in defending it and in encountering dangers, please them so much,

that they become almost blind to the faults, errors, and defects, of their favourite ecclesiastic.—Lastly, it deserves, also, to be remembered, that those, who are most godly and practical in their conversation, and whose lives are most devoted to promote the salvation of the souls of men, who are the least worldly minded, and meddle the least with political discussions, and controversies,—such persons, with regret, are compelled to withhold an unlimited approbation of Wickliff. They gratefully praise God for having raised up a champion for the faith of the gospel in the most perilous times, and when very much needed;—they rejoice in finding evidence that this celebrated champion did belong to the true church of Christ; they charitably hope and believe that he said and did many things, which, had they been recorded, might perhaps have made it still clearer that he belonged to the most distinguished part of Christ's little flock; and lastly, they sincerely lament, that so honoured a servant of God, should seem, on any occasion in supporting the righteous cause of religion, to have relied on political dexterity or on the favour of a court, or to have afforded a handle for the suspicion of artifice and duplicity.

For the purpose of still further explaining the different degrees of panegyric or of censure with which the character of Wickliff is loaded by historians and biographers, there remain several considerations, to which the reader will do well to advert.

1. The mendicant friars, who settled in Oxford about the year 1230, proved very troublesome and offensive to the university. Their insolent behaviour produced endless quarrels, and their conduct in general was so exceptionable, that so far from being objects of charity, they became a reproach to all religion.—Wickliff lashed this set of men with great acrimony and acuteness; and, by exposing their shameful corruptions and hypocritical pretences, made known his learning and talents; and established his own reputation and consequence. He became at once the beloved and the admired champion of the university. On the contrary, the mendicants “were set on a rage and madness; and even as hornets with their sharp stings they assailed this good man on every side, fighting for their altars, paunches and bellies.”^b But the daring, active, spirit of Wickliff was not to be overcome by the opposition of such men. Fortunately for him, they were in the highest discredit at Oxford; whereas our reformer was looked up to almost as an oracle; for he had not, as yet, proceeded to those lengths of innovation, which afterwards called forth the vengeance of the hierarchy, and involved him in various

^b Fox's Acts and Monuments.

difficulties and persecutions.—His friends procured him a benefice; he took his degree of doctor of divinity; he was elected into the professor's chair; and he read lectures publicly with the greatest applause.^c

2. The credit and interest of Wickliff were much strengthened by the active part which he took in supporting the independence of the crown, against the pope's pretensions and menaces. Pope Urban, claimed a tribute from king Edward III. The clergy in general espoused the cause of his holiness;—but Wickliff distinguished himself, by publishing a masterly answer to the most plausible arguments, which could be produced in support of so unjust a demand. This step irritated his brethren, the clergy, with the pope at their head;—the professor of divinity, however, had the parliament, as well as every disinterested subject of the realm, on his side in this question.—From the same cause he seems to have been first made known at court, and particularly to the duke of Lancaster. His great learning, increasing celebrity, and powerful connexions, all contributed to support his courage, and to give vigour to the resolutions which he had secretly made for reforming the prevailing corruptions.—Accordingly, he proceeded to open the eyes of the people with still greater boldness and plainness of speech. He demonstrated the Romish religion to be a system of errors: he attacked the scandalous lives of the monastic clergy; and showed how they invented and multiplied such superstitious opinions and doctrines, as suited their worldly, sensual, and avaricious views.

3. These extraordinary steps both alarmed the hierarchy and excited its resentment. The clergy raised violent clamours against the heretic: The archbishop of Canterbury took the lead; and the professor was silenced and deprived. In this very moment of his disgrace, we find Dr. Wickliff was brought to court, treated with peculiar kindness, and appointed one of the king's ambassadors,^d for the purpose of treating with the pope, concerning a variety of intolerable hardships and usurpations under which the nation had long groaned. On his return, he appears to have recovered his station in Oxford, and to have inveighed against the Church of Rome, in harsher language than he had ever done before, both in his public lectures and in private. His negotiations abroad with the pope's nuncios had, probably, afforded him opportunities of seeing more striking proofs of the ambition, covetousness, tyranny, and insolence of the papal domination. In this part of the history of our reformer, there is considerable defect and obscurity. We find however that, notwithstanding his employments in the university, he did not neglect

to cultivate his great connexions. He was often at court, and continued in high credit with the duke of Lancaster; and though, by many of the clergy, he was esteemed an enemy to the Church and a false brother, he obtained the valuable rectory of Lutterworth, through the royal favour. These facts deserve particular notice; as they determine several points beyond all controversy: namely,—the great weight of Wickliff's character and reputation;—his disposition to political concerns and to public business;—and lastly, the sources of that esteem and applause on the one hand; and on the other, of that hatred and calumny which he met with so plentifully in the former part of his life.

4. While the reformer confined himself to attacks on the luxury and indolence of the mendicant friars, he was the favourite of the university of Oxford: while he only opposed the exorbitant claims of the papacy upon the king and his subjects, he was admired and applauded by the English court and parliament: His conduct however, in both these instances, marked him at the court of Rome as an object of detestation and vengeance; and we need not wonder, if the ecclesiastical dignitaries in England, and the regular clergy in general, sympathized with the pope in sentiment and feeling. But as soon as Wickliff began to assail the Roman Catholic religion in a closer manner, and to level his batteries at its very foundations; when he was no longer content with exposing the infamous lives and practices of the monastic orders, or with declaiming against the avaricious encroachments and contemptible superstitions of the papal system; when he proceeded to show how the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and the true spirit of Christianity were almost lost amidst the innumerable abominations of popery; when he descended to particulars,—attacked the reigning doctrines of transubstantiation, of worshipping images, and deceased saints, and above all, of merits and satisfactions,—and restored in their place the sound evangelical doctrines of the meritorious sacrifice of our Saviour, and of justification by faith, we then find the whole hierarchy in a flame. The archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London then complain to the pope; and the pope in great wrath sends bull after bull, to those dignitaries, directing them to take immediate cognizance of Wickliff's heresies, and to imprison him. Hence the citation, of which and of its consequences we have already given a concise account.^e And it deserves to be remembered, how in that affair the pope and his delegates had the art to select such articles of accusation against the innovator, as might bring the least odium upon themselves, and at the same time, prove a severe

^c *Leisn. de Script. Brit.*

^d *Rymer's Fœd. ra, A. D. 1374,*

^e See p. 594.

trial of the fortitude and sincerity of the heretic, and be likely to involve him in much difficulty and equivocation. Hence also the chancellor's peremptory decree, at Oxford,¹ against Wickliff's notions of transubstantiation; and we may add, hence also the decline of our theologian's interest with the nobility and worldly persons of all descriptions. To understand this rightly, we should constantly keep in view the distinction that is to be made between the applause which, in general, failed not to accompany Wickliff, as a censurer of gross immoralities, and an advocate for religious liberty, and the cold approbation or sceptical reserve with which he was treated, considered as a preacher of the pure Gospel of Christ, and a reviver of the most important practical truths. In the former case, he met with few to oppose or envy him, except those who were immediately interested in supporting vice or usurpation; but, in regard to the latter, the greater part of mankind did as they have often done in far more enlightened times,—they either suspected that he carried his notions too far; or they kept aloof from him with a profane and indolent negligence; or lastly, they wavered between the religion in which they had been educated, and the reformer's novelties, and by immersing themselves in business, or in pleasure, both stifled the convictions of conscience, and escaped the dangers of persecution.

5. It will easily be conceived, that to accomplish Wickliff's views, one of the most popular, and at the same time most useful steps, which he could possibly have taken, was his translation of the bible into the English language.—The clergy indeed clamoured against this measure almost universally; and it may be instructive, as well as entertaining to the reader, to see by a short quotation from a learned canon¹ of Leicester, and a contemporary of Wickliff, what was thought to be good reasoning by the ecclesiastics of that day. "Christ," says he, "committed the Gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might minister it to the laity and weaker persons, according to the exigency of times and persons' wants: but this master John Wickliff translated it out of Latin into English; and by that means laid it more open to the laity and to women who could read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy, and those of them who had the best understanding. And so the gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under swine; and that which used to be precious to both clergy and laity, is made, as it were, the common jests of both; and the jewel of the Church is turned into the sport of the laity."

In our times, one cannot but be astonish-

ed, that the bishops, after much consultation, should have brought a bill into parliament to suppress Wickliff's bible;—but it was thrown out by a great majority.

The effect which, under the direction of the good providence of God, the publication of the Holy Scriptures translated into our own language, produced on the minds of men, must have been very considerable in so great length of time:—and it is not easy to conceive how any human means could contribute more to the spreading of the essential doctrines of Christianity.—I wish that several diligent and spirited panegyrist of Wickliff had shewn an anxiety, in their laudable researches into antiquity, to furnish instances of the conversion of our countrymen, from the ways of the world to the practice of godliness. That many such instances did exist, through the indefatigable labours of Wickliff in public and in private, I doubt not;—yet I mean not to insinuate, that if they had been recorded, they would have added much to the fame or celebrity of the reformer, in the present circumstances of the world.—There is indeed, in the holy scriptures, a most encouraging promise to those that be wise, and who shall "turn many unto righteousness;" but,—it is not in this state of existence, it is when they shall awake from their sleep in the dust of the earth, that they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.²

6. To return: Let the reader remember, that Wickliff not only published an English translation of the bible; but also pleaded, in a very spirited and sensible manner, the right of the people to read the scriptures.¹ All this tended the more to provoke the clergy, and to increase his popularity with the laity. Disinterested persons of every description, if they possessed the least degree of seriousness, and liberality of thinking, must have been gratified to have the bible rescued from obscurity; though we may allow without difficulty, that many sincere Roman catholics of the unlearned and weaker sort, may have been greatly puzzled and distressed in their minds, between the discoveries made to them by the scriptures, and that mass of wretched superstitions, which they had been accustomed to receive, all their days, with implicit faith.

If these facts and suggestions prove useful to the curious reader, who wishes to understand and settle the character of this extraordinary reformer, and to account for the various lights,—and I might add,—the various obscurities, in which he has been transmitted to us, I have gained my aim.—I shall conclude this whole narrative with two short quotations.

¹ See p. 508.
² Knyghton, de Event.

¹ Den. xii. 3, 5.

² Speculum secular: also Doctrina Christiana, lib. 1.

The first is, from a very concise life of Wickliff, written by Dr. Thomas James, author of the apology already mentioned.

"God gave Dr. Wickliff grace to see the truth of his gospel, and by seeing it, to loathe all superstition and popery....By Abelard and others, he was grounded in the right faith of the sacrament of the Lord's supper; by Bradwardine in the nature of a true sole-justifying faith, against merit-mongers and pardoners, PELAGIANS and PAPISTS. Finally, by reading Grossteste's works, in whom he seemed to be most conversant, he descried the pope to be antichrist."

The second is a very solemn declaration of Wickliff, contained in one of his Latin tracts.^h

"Let God be my witness," says he, "that I principally intend the honour of God, and the good of the Church, from a spirit of veneration to the divine word, and of obedience to the law of Christ.—But if, with that intention, a sinister view of vain glory, of secular gain, or of vindictive malice, hath crept in unknown to myself, I sincerely grieve on the account, and, by the grace of God, will guard against it."

Dr. James asks, "What could be spoken more ingenuously, soberly, or christianly."ⁱ

It has been observed, that the distinguishing tenet of Wickliff was, undoubtedly, the election of grace. He calls the church an assembly of predestinated persons. Much more might be produced to the same effect. On some occasions he speaks in such strong terms on this subject, that he has been understood to lean even to the doctrines of absolute necessity and fatalism.—The student of ecclesiastical history may be pleased to have some of the evidence, relative to this matter, laid before him, that he may have the opportunity of judging for himself.

If our account of the proceedings of the council of Constance, p. , it appears that the heretical opinions of Wickliff were digested into forty-five specific articles, and unanimously condemned by that assembly.—Two of those articles were, viz.

Article 26. The prayer of the reprobate is of no avail: and

Article 27. All things happen from absolute necessity.^m

The manner in which this great man defended the latter, proves him to have been a deep thinker and a skillful disputant.

Our Lord, says he in his Trialogus, affirmed, that such or such an event should come to pass. Its accomplishment therefore was unavoidable.—The antecedent is

necessary: by parity of argument the consequent is so too. The consequent is not in the power of any created being, so much as the declarations of Christ, and the elections of his mind, are not liable to accidents. And therefore, as it is absolutely certain and cannot be otherwise but that Christ hath foretold certain events, those events must necessarily come to pass.—The same kind of argument will demonstrate every event to be necessary, the future existence of which hath been previously determined by God: and it will make no difference, in whatever manner, or by whatever after discoveries in time, it may have pleased God to inform us that he had actually determined so, before the creation of the world. If the thing be clearly and necessarily so, namely, that God did predetermine any event, the consequence is inevitable; that event must take place. Now what can prevent future events from having been predetermined by the deity? Want of knowledge? inconsistency of will? efficacy of impediments to interrupt his purpose? But with respect to God there is no room for any of these suppositions. Every future event must therefore necessarily take place."

Wickliff states the above argument, drawn from the prophecies of our Lord, with great triumph. It had puzzled, he said, the very best reasoners; and by its brilliancy had absolutely confounded superficial divines; among whom he reckons the then bishop of Armagh, who owned that he had laboured for twenty years to reconcile the free-will of man with the certain completion of Christ's predictions; and after all, saw no way of evading the conclusion in favour of necessity, but by allowing that Christ might possibly have been mistaken and have misinformed his church in regard to future events.

From this and similar passages, it has been concluded that Wickliff was a fatalist. The whole question turns upon the meaning of such expressions as, "*sicut necessario Christus illud asseruit, ita necessario illud eveniet.*" The just interpretation of which, according to Wickliff's ideas, is given, I think, in the translation above. He never meant to say that Christ was not a free agent, but merely that it was absolutely CERTAIN, and could not be otherwise, that Christ HAD MADE such or such declarations. I am confirmed in this opinion by three reasons, 1. From having very diligently considered the passage itself as it stands in the ninth chapter of the third book of the Trialogus. 2. From observing that some of those who have thought differently, have probably never seen the Trialogus itself. The book is very scarce, and they do not refer to it, but only to certain extracts from it by Widefort,

^h De Ver. Script.
ⁱ Dr. James's Apology.
^m L'Enfant.

ⁿ Lib. III. Cap. 9. Trialog.

who was an enemy and gives them unfairly: And 3. By attending to Wickliff's sentiments as they are delivered in other parts of that work. In book the second, chapter the fourteenth, he says; "If you ask, what is the real cause of the eternal decrees of God before they are made, the answer is, the WILL OF GOD, or GOD HIMSELF: And again in the tenth chapter of the first book, where the author is treating particularly of the wisdom and power of God, he expressly affirms, that the divine energy acts with the most perfect freedom, though the effects produced by it must necessarily happen. "*Quantum ad libertatem divinæ potentie, patet quod est summè libera, et tamen quicquid facit, necessario eveniat.*"

"That the Supreme Being acts in the most exact conformity to his own decrees is a truth which scripture again and again asserts; but that HE was and is absolutely free in decreeing, is no less asserted by the inspired writers; who with one voice declare that the disposals and appointments of the Almighty do not depend on any antecedent and fatal necessity, but on his own free choice directed by infinite wisdom." If Wickliff could be shewn to go further than this, he ought not, I think, to be defended.

Thomas Netter, commonly called Thomas of Walden, a learned Roman catholic of the Carmelite order, was one of the greatest adversaries of Wickliff. In his four folio volumes we find sixty dangerous, heretical, articles enumerated against the English reformer. The following are among them.

1. That God gives no good things to his enemies.
2. That God is not more willing to reward the good than to punish the wicked.
3. That all things come to pass by fatal necessity.
4. That God could not make the world otherwise than it is made.
5. That God cannot do any thing which he doth not do.
6. That God cannot bring to pass that something should return into nothing.

In perusing the distinct and pious arguments of Bradwardine, we every where meet with much entertainment and instruction. Not so, in traversing the abstruse, thorny, metaphysical, subtleties of Wickliff and his adversaries. No one need be surprised if some inconsistencies and even contradictions should be found in his writings. We have seen, that in himself he was not a very consistent character, whether we regard his words or his actions. Then his insight into Christian truths was gradual; so that he may be expected not to hold the same language at different periods of his life. There can, however, be no doubt, but that he loved light and truth; and the real wonder is, that in his circumstances he attained so much of

them. Lastly, his writings have come down to us very imperfect; many of them are entirely lost, and we are obliged to take the accounts of his enemies.—With no little need for patience I have examined Walden's evidence against him respecting the fatalism contained in the third, fourth, and fifth articles above-mentioned; and am convinced that he misrepresents the sentiments of the excellent man, whom he so much disliked. Wickliff, on several occasions, for argument sake, appears to grant that there would be a contradiction in supposing any thing to be producible, which God does not actually produce; but in one place he expressly informs us that it was an usual thing with him to guard concessions of that sort by limiting them in such a manner that they should be no restraint on the Divine Will; every thing, according to him, is producible, WHICH GOD PLEASES TO PRODUCE. I know very well, says Wickliff, that in pretending to treat of the wisdom and power of God I am plunging into an ocean of difficulties, where I may be apt to prate concerning many things without having a good foundation for what I say.—I know that it is a very hard matter to preserve the due course, especially as on many points I think differently from what I formerly did. However, as I was then ready to own my error, so I trust I always shall be, whenever I am shewn that I have advanced any thing contrary to truth."

If Thomas of Walden had properly attended to this candid concession, and honest protestation, which are to be found at a very little distance from the passages that he thought so objectionable, he would probably have treated Wickliff with less severity.

I cannot dismiss this head in better terms than those of a very useful memorialist,* who speaks of Wickliff, in substance as follows.

"I intend neither to deny, dissemble, defend, nor excuse any of his faults. We have this treasure, says the apostle, in EARTHEN vessels; and he that shall endeavour to prove a pitcher of clay to be a pot of gold, will take great pains to small purpose. Yes, should I be over officious to retain myself to plead for Wickliff's faults, that glorious saint would sooner chide than thank me. He was a man and so subject to error; he lived in a dark age, and was vexed with opposition; and it is therefore unreasonable that the constitution of his positive opinions should be GUESSED by his polemical bent, when he was chafed in disputation. Besides, envy has falsely fathered many foul aspersions upon him. What a pity it is that we have not his works to hear him speak in his own behalf! Were they all extant, we might know the occasion, intention and connexion of what he spake, together with the

* Lib. I. Cap. 10. and III. C. 8.
Fulmer

limitations, restrictions, distinctions, and qualifications of what he maintained. There we might see what was overplus of passion, and what the just measure of his judgment. Many phrases, heretical in sound, would appear orthodox in sense. Some of his poisonous passages, dressed with due caution, would prove wholesome, and even cordial truths: Many of his expressions wanting, not *GRANUM PONDERIS*, but *SALIS*, no weight of truth, but some grains of discretion. But alas! two hundred of his books are burnt; and we are fain to borrow the bare titles of them from his adversaries, who have winnowed his works, as Satan did Peter, not to find corn, but chaff."

SICKNESS OF WICKLIFF.

The prodigious exertions of Wickliff, and the harassing persecutions he underwent in 1378, are said to have been the occasion of a dangerous fit of sickness, which brought him almost to the point of death in the beginning of the year 1379. The mendicant friars hearing of this, immediately selected a committee of grave doctors, and instructed them in what they were to say to the sick man who had so grievously offended them. And that the message might be the more solemn, they joined with them four of the most respectable citizens, whom they termed Aldermen of the Wards. These commissioners found Wickliff lying in his bed; and they are said first of all to have wished him health, and a recovery from his distemper. After some time they put him in mind of the many and great injuries which he had done to the begging friars by his sermons and writings, and exhorted him, that as he had now very little time to live, he would, like a true penitent, bewail and revoke, in their presence, whatever things he had said to their disparagement. But Dr. Wickliff, immediately recovering strength, called his servants to him, and ordered them to raise him a little on his pillows. Which when they had done, he said with a loud voice, "I SHALL NOT DIE, BUT LIVE AND DECLARE THE EVIL DEEDS OF THE FRIARS." On which the doctors, and the other deputies, departed from him in no little confusion."

ANECDOTES RELATIVE TO WICKLIFF.

S. Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered in the insurrection by Wat Tyler; and was succeeded in the primacy by William Courtney, who had always shewn himself one of Wickliff's most active adversaries. The new archbishop highly approved of the proceedings of the university of Oxford, mentioned in page 598; and he deter-

mined to use all the authority of his high office to crush Wickliff and his followers. He was not duly invested with the consecrated pall from Rome, till the sixth of May 1382; and on the seventeenth of the same month he called together a court of select bishops and doctors.

The memorandum in the archbishop's register states, that the court having met in the monastery of the friars' preachers, certain conclusions repugnant to the determinations of the church were laid before them; and that after good deliberation, they met again, and pronounced ten of the conclusions heretical, and fourteen erroneous and repugnant to the church.

It does not appear by the records that Wickliff himself was cited to appear before the archbishop; only the names of a few persons who espoused his opinions are mentioned. Wickliff is said to have claimed the privilege of being exempted from episcopal jurisdiction, on the ground of being a member of the university, and holding an office therein.

There cannot be the smallest doubt but that these proceedings were levelled chiefly at the obnoxious reformer. But till with my own eyes I read the seventh heretical article in the page above referred to in Wilkins' Concilia, I could scarce believe it possible that one of the charges against either Wickliff or his followers should be, *Deus debet obedire diabolo*, "God ought to obey the devil." This single fact shows to what a length calumny and credulity may go, when men are heated by passion and prejudice.

However, such violence and misrepresentation served but in the end to promote the cause of truth. Wickliff defended his opinions with spirit, took particular notice of this charge, and gained many new friends. "Such things," says he, "do they invent of catholic men that they may blacken their reputation, as if they held this impious opinion, that God is a devil; or any other open heretical tenet; and they are prepared by false and slanderous witnesses to fix such heresies on good men as if they had invented them."

An extraordinary, but well authenticated circumstance proves the ability and address of Courtney. At the instant when the extracts from the writings of Wickliff were produced, and the court was going to enter upon business on the seventeenth of May, a violent earthquake shook the monastery. The afflicted bishops and doctors threw down their papers, and cried out, "the business is displeasing God." The firm and intrepid archbishop, coolly and quietly chid their superstitious fears; and with great promptitude gave the matter a different turn.

"If this earthquake," said he, "means any thing, it portends the downfall of heresy. For as noxious vapours are confined in the bowels of the earth, and are expelled by these violent concussions, so through our strenuous endeavours, the kingdom must be purified from the pestilential opinions of reprobate men. But this is not to be done without great commotion."

Wickliff in his writings often alluded to this accident, calling it the council of the herydene, which is the old English word for earthquake.

When the archbishop and his court had condemned Wickliff's doctrines, and had finished the business for which they had met together, a sermon was preached at the church of the grey friars by John Cunningham, a distinguished adversary of Wickliff. At this sermon we are told there was present among others a knight named Cornelius Clowse, who was a great favourer of the conclusions then condemned, and one of those who held and taught them; nor would he believe otherwise of the sacrament than that real and true bread was present, according to Wickliff's opinion.

The next day, being the vigil of the Holy Trinity, the knight went to the same convent to hear mass. Behold! at the breaking of the host, upon casting his eye towards the friar who happened to celebrate mass, he saw in his hands, very flesh, raw and bloody, and divided into three parts. Full of wonder and amazement, he called his squire that he might see it; but the squire saw nothing more than usual. Moreover, in the middle of the third piece, which was to be put into the chalice, the knight saw this name *Jesus* written in letters of flesh, all raw and bloody; which was very wonderful to behold. On the next day, namely, the feast of the Holy Trinity, the same friar, preaching at Paul's cross, told this story to all the people, and the knight attested the truth of it, and promised that he would fight and die in that cause; for that in the sacrament of the altar there was the very body of Christ, and not bread only as he had formerly believed.

Such were the artifices of those who, at that time, zealously defended the popish doctrines.

I have taken much pains to reconcile the inconsistencies and obscurities which are to be found in the accounts of the latter part of Wickliff's life. Even in consulting such authorities as Spelman, and Wilkins, I find erroneous and contradictory dates of one of the most material original records.—I believe the following brief account does not differ essentially from the truth.

In the former part of the summer of 1381, Dr. Barton, the vice-chancellor, or chancel-

lor, as he is called in the instrument of the university of Oxford, appeared in the public schools while Dr. Wickliff was sitting in the chair; and, with the unanimous consent of twelve doctors his assessors, pronounced the professor's doctrines respecting the sacrament, heretical.

Wickliff, upon the first hearing of this sentence, is said to have been put to some confusion; but he soon recovered himself, and told the vice-chancellor, that neither he nor his assistants, could confute the opinions they had ventured to condemn.

From this sentence the professor appealed to king Richard; but the duke of Lancaster, who in the manuscripts is styled a wise counsellor and a faithful son of the sacred church, came expressly to Oxford, and, as is hinted in page 598, ordered Wickliff to harangue no more on that subject. But he did not choose to obey.

At length, Courtney, a more active and determined primate than his predecessor Sudbury, finding that neither the strong measures which had been taken at Oxford, nor his own subsequent proceedings at the earthquake-council, availed to the silencing of the audacious heretic, devised the following expedients, which enabled him at least to rid the university of the man whose person had hitherto been sheltered under academical immunities.

1. He obtained the king's patent, empowering the archbishop and his suffragans to arrest and imprison all persons who privately or publicly should maintain the heresies in question.

2. He also obtained the king's patent directed to the chancellor and proctors at Oxford, appointing them inquisitors-general, and ordering them to banish and expel from the university and town of Oxford all who were advocates of Wickliff's heresies, and even all who should dare to receive into their inns or houses Wickliff himself, or any other of his friends, suspected of the like.

From this storm Wickliff thought proper to retire, and the haughty archbishop had the satisfaction of seeing the man he so much disliked, compelled to retreat before his power, to Lutterworth, an obscure part of the kingdom.

DEATH OF WICKLIFF.

I have followed Mosheim, who says that this event took place in the year 1387. On more accurate inquiry, I find that soon after his removal to his parsonage, he was seized with the palsy, from which, however, he recovered so as to resume his studies and pastoral exertions. It was, I believe, on the 28th of December, 1384, when he was at

* MS. Bodl. et Chron. Mon. Alban.
* Knyghton de Event. Angl. 2634.

* Wilkins, Vol. III. p. 171.
* Ibid. p. 156 & 166.

tending divine service, in his church at Lutterworth, that he was attacked by a second and fatal stroke of the palsy. His tongue in particular was so much affected, that he never spoke again.

The bigoted papists gloried in his death, and one of them has insulted his memory unmercifully. "It was reported," says Walsingham, "that he had prepared accusations and blasphemies, which he had intended on the day he was taken ill, to have uttered in his pulpit against Thomas a Becket, the saint and martyr of the day; but by the judgment of God he was suddenly struck, and the palsy seized his limbs; and that mouth, which was to have spoken huge things against God, and his saint, and the holy church, was miserably drawn aside and afforded a frightful spectacle to the beholders. His tongue was speechless, and his head shook, showing plainly that the curse of God was upon him."

The reader will be beforehand with me in any remarks I could make on this account.

It was in the year 1415 that the council of Constance declared that Wickliff had died an obstinate heretic; and ordered his bones, if they could be distinguished from the bones of the faithful, to be dug up and thrown upon a dunghill. This sentence was not executed till thirteen years after, when orders for that purpose were sent by Pope Martin V. to R. Fleming, bishop of Lincoln and diocesan of Lutterworth. Accordingly, the bishop's officers took the bones out of the grave, where they had lain undisturbed forty-four years, burnt them, and cast the remaining ashes into an adjoining brook.⁷

Among the forty-five articles of Wickliff's doctrines condemned at Constance in 1415, I observe the sixth to be the very same with that which stands the seventh among those pronounced heretical by Courtney and his council in 1382. "God ought to obey the devil." I have allowed in general that the council of Constance did not misrepresent the opinions of Wickliff.—But this article certainly ought to be excepted; and a diligent examination, were it worth while, might probably discover others in the same predicament.

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

Wickliff, in one place, defines the CHURCH to be the congregation of just men for whom Christ shed his blood. And in others he speaks thus: "Scripture is the faith of the church, and the more it is known in an orthodox sense, the better; therefore as secular men ought to know the faith, the divine word is to be taught them in whatever language is best known to them. The truth of

the faith is clearer and more exact in the scripture than the priests know how to express it; and if one may say so, there are many prelates who are ignorant of scripture, and others who conceal things contained in it. It seems useful therefore that the faithful should themselves search and discover the sense of the faith by having the scriptures in a language which they know and understand. Christ and his apostles converted men by making known to them the scriptures in that language which was familiar to them. Why then ought not the modern disciples of Christ to collect fragments from the loaf; and, as they did, clearly open the scriptures to the people that they may know them? The apostle teaches, that we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be answerable for all the goods entrusted to us; it is necessary therefore the faithful should know these goods and the use of them, that they may give a proper answer. For the answer by a prelate or an attorney will not THEN avail, but every one must answer in his own person.⁸

And in this manner did our zealous reformer argue for the propriety of a translation of the bible into the English language.

In his prologue to the translation, he informs us of the method in which he proceeded, notwithstanding the opposition he met with, and the clamours that were raised against him on the account. 1. He, with several who assisted him, got together all the Latin bibles they could, which they diligently collated and corrected, in order that they might have one Latin bible near the truth. In the next place, they collected the ordinary comments, with which they studied the text so as to make themselves masters of its sense and meaning. Lastly, they consulted the old grammarians and ancient divines respecting the hard words and sentences. After all this was done, Wickliff then set about the translation, which, he resolved, should not be a literal one, but so as to express the meaning as clearly as he could.

A specimen or two of Wickliff's New Testament, in the old English of his time, may not be displeasing to the reader.

"*Matth. xi. 25, 26.* In þilke tyme Jhesus answeride & seide, I knowleche to thee, Fadir, Lord of Hevene & of earthe, for thou hast hid these thingis fro wise men and redy, & hast schewid hem to litil children. So, Fadir; for so it was playenge to fore thee.

"*John x. 26—30.* Ye beleven not, for ye ben not of my scheep. My scheep herea my vois, and I knowe hem, and thei aue me. And I gyye to hem everlastynge life, & thei schulen not perische, withouten end; & noon schal raxache hem fro myn hand. That thing that my Fadir gaf to me, is more

than alle thingis : & no man may rauysche from my Fadir bond. I & the Fadir ben oon.

"Rom. ix. 12. It was seid to him, that the more schulde serve the lesse: as it is writun, I louyde Jacob, but I hatide Esau. What therefore schulen we seie? wher wickednesse be aientis God? God forbode. For he seith to Moises, I schal have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I schal ghyve mercy on whom I have mercy. Therefore, it is not neither of man willynge, neither rennyng; but of God haunng mercy. And the Scripture seith to Farao, For to this thing have I styrrid thee, that I schewe in thee my vertu, and that my name be teeld in al erthe. Therefore, of whom God wole, he hath mercy: & whom he wole, he endurith. Thanne seith thou to me, what is sought ghit, for who withstondith his will? Oo man, what art thou that answerist to God! Wher a maad thing seith to him that made it, What hast thou maad me so? Wher a potters of cley hath not power to make, of the same gobet, oo vessel into onour, a nothir into dyspyt!"

LOLLARDS.

Mr. Collier in his Ecclesiastical History, after allowing that several abjured, and that six actually suffered, observes, that these men were accused for reading the New Testament in English; and why, says he, was this so great a crime? Because it was Wickliff's translation and condemned by the church. The English clergy did not believe this translator had reached the original, and rightly expressed the mind of the Holy Ghost.... They were careful to prevent the

spreading of Lollardism, and we need not wonder.—P. 11. Vol. II. COLLIER.

It is quite painful to see so valuable a writer undertake to speak thus in mitigation of the abominable cruelties of the papists in those times.

Further; he does not believe that "six men and a woman were burnt at Coventry for teaching their children the Lord's prayer; the ten commandments, and the creed in the vulgar tongue;" and he expresses a hope that Bishop Burnet, who mentions the fact in his History of the Reformation, was misinformed. "The learned historian," says he, "cites Fox for his authority. But this looks like a lame story, for Fox cites no other authority than one Mother Hall."

On reading the above I was curious to see what Fox actually DOES SAY; and here I shall transcribe his very words without making any observation on them. "The WITNESSES of this history," says he, "be yet alive, which both SAW THEM and KNEW THEM. OF WHOM ONE is Mother Hall, dwelling now in Baginton, two miles from Coventry. By whom also this is testified of them, that they above all other in Coventry pretended most show and worship of devotion at the holding up of the sacrament,—whether to colour the matter or no, it is not known."

Mr. Fox speaks of the zeal of the holy men in those times of persecution in the most glowing terms; "To see their travails, their earnest seeking, their burning zeal, their readings, watchings, their sweet assemblies, their love and concord, their godly living, their faithful marrying with the faithful, may make us now in these our days of free profession to blush for shame."—P. 23. Vol. II. Fox.

CENTURY XV.

CHAPTER I.

THE LOLLARDS.

TERMS of reproach have, in all ages, been applied to real Christians. Lollard, the name given to the followers of Wickliff, is to be considered as one of them. My chief reason for using it is, that the persons, whose story is the subject of this chapter, may be more distinctly defined.

That same Courtney, bishop of London,

whose examination of Wickliff, together with the extraordinary circumstances, which attended that examination, has been laid before the reader, afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury; and, in that exalted station, employed himself with great vehemence and asperity against the disciples of the man who, by the protection of the duke of Lancaster, had escaped his vengeance. King Richard II., also, was induced to patronise this persecution, though it does not appear that during his reign, any of the Lollards were actually put to death. That the blind fury of

* N. B. This being a passage frequently quoted in controversy, it is supposed, that very particular pains were taken with it by the translator.

ambitious and unprincipled men was thus, for a time, restrained from committing the last acts of injustice and barbarity, is to be ascribed, partly to the power of the duke of Lancaster, who may be called the political father of the Lollards; and partly to the influence of Anne, the consort of Richard II. and sister of Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia. —The accounts of this princess, in regard to religion, are brief; yet they merit our particular attention, because they seem to illustrate the course of Divine Providence, in paving the way for that connexion between England and Bohemia, by which the labours of Wickliff became so serviceable in propagating the gospel in the latter country. She lived with king Richard about eleven years; and died in the year 1394, in the seventeenth year of his reign.* It is remarked of her, that she had in her possession the gospels in the English language, with four learned commentators upon them. At her funeral, Arundel, archbishop of York, in his sermon adverted to this circumstance, and expressed much surprise at it, as she was born an alien. The prelate added, that she had sent to him, for his inspection and judgment, her four English translations of the gospel, and that he had found them true and faithful. He confessed that it appeared to him a marvelous instance of godliness, that so great a lady would humbly condescend to study such excellent books: and he completed his encomium by declaring that he never knew a woman of such extraordinary piety. —In the same sermon, he sharply rebuked the negligence of bishops and of others.

This relation may probably induce the reader to conjecture that Arundel himself must have been almost a Lollard. At least he cannot but be both surprised and mortified to find, that shortly after the death of the good Queen Anne, this same prelate, to the utmost of his power, stirred up the king to harass, throughout the whole kingdom, the very persons who should dare, in their native language, to read and study the Gospels of Jesus Christ.

Such inconsistencies are not uncommon in the annals of human nature.

About the same time, I find that several persons, who were accused of holding those speculative tenets of Wickliff, which I have allowed to be indefensible, did however, in their examinations, perfectly clear themselves of every reasonable suspicion of factious innovation.⁴ In fact, the whole body of the Lollards in general were, in practice, so perfectly void of offence, that speculative errors formed the only charge that could be brought against them; and, even in regard to these errors, there seems reason to apprehend that the followers of Wickliff very much melio-

rated the sentiments of their master and leader. ONLY for the gospel's sake they suffered; whatever might be the pretences or their enemies.

In the year 1397 died, John De Trevisa, a gentleman born at Crocadon, in Cornwall; a secular priest, and vicar of Berkeley; a man, who translated many voluminous writings, and particularly the bible in the English language. Thomas, Lord Berkeley, his patron, induced him to undertake the last-mentioned work. This nobleman appears to have had a regard for the written word of God, which was little read or known in that age. He had the apocalypse, in Latin and French, inscribed on the walls of his chapel at Berkeley. Trevisa was, also, distinguished for his aversion to the monastic system. "Christ," said he, "sent apostles and preachers, not monks and mendicant friars." He died in peace, almost ninety years old. Though neither this clergyman nor his patron are usually ranked among Lollards, yet do they seem to be sufficiently distinguished by their piety and veneration for the scriptures, to deserve a place in these memoirs. The period of history we are reviewing, is not so fruitful in godliness as to require us to pass over in silence such examples as these.⁵

Richard II. being deposed, Henry of Lancaster, the son of that same John of Gaunt, who had patronised Wickliff, usurped the throne in the year 1399; and, shortly after, was crowned by Arundel, then archbishop of Canterbury. Both the king and the archbishop had demonstrated by their conduct, that they were ready to sacrifice every thing to their ambition. It is not therefore matter of surprise, either that the murderer of King Richard should proceed to persecute, with extreme barbarity, the Lollards, whom his father had so zealously protected; or, that the archbishop, who had supported the usurper in his iniquitous pretensions to the crown, should also concur with him in his plan to crush those reformers. The power of the hierarchy was formidable to all men; and every one, who thirsted after secular greatness, found himself obliged, by political necessity, which is the primary law of unprincipled men, to court that power, and to obey its most unreasonable commands. Thus influenced, Henry IV. and Arundel commenced a persecution more terrible than any, which had ever been known under the English kings. William Sawtre was the first man who was burnt in England for opposing the abominations of popery. He was a clergyman in London, who openly taught the doctrines of Wickliff. And, though, through the weakness of human nature, he had revoked and abjured those doc-

* Fox, p. 578.

⁴ Ibid. p. 409, &c.

⁵ Fuller's Church History, p. 151.

times before the bishop of Norwich, he afterwards recovered so much strength of mind, as to incur a second prosecution for his open confession of evangelical truth before the archbishop. Among other charges, which it would be tedious to recount, this was one; "he had declared, that a priest was more bound to preach the word of God, than to recite particular services at certain canonical hours.*" Such was the genius of the reigning superstition! The exposition of the word of God was looked on as a small matter, in comparison of the customary formalities. Sawtre, glorying in the cross of Christ, and strengthened by divine grace, suffered the flames of martyrdom in the year of our Lord, fourteen hundred.*

The name of John of Badby, a low and illiterate workman, well deserves to be recorded for the honour of divine truth. Arundel took serious pains to persuade him, that the consecrated bread was really and properly the body Christ. "After the consecration, it remaineth," said Badby, "the same material bread, which it was before; nevertheless it is a sign, or sacrament of the living God.—I believe the omnipotent God in trinity to be ONE. But if every consecrated host be the Lord's body, then there are twenty thousand gods in England." After he had been delivered to the secular power by the bishops, he was, by the king's writ, condemned to be burned. The prince of Wales, happening to be present, very earnestly exhorted him to recant, adding the most terrible menaces, of the vengeance which would overtake him, if he should continue in his obstinacy. Badby, however, was inflexible. As soon as he felt the fire, he cried, Mercy! The prince, supposing that he was entreating the mercy of his judges, ordered the fire to be quenched. "Will you forsake heresy," said young Henry; and will you conform to the faith of the holy church? If you will, you shall have a yearly stipend out of the king's treasury." The martyr was unmoved; and Henry, in a rage, declared, that he might now look for no favour. Badby gloriously finished his course in the flames.

It was a marvellous instance of the strength of Christ made perfect in weakness, and a striking proof that God hath chosen the good things of the world to confound the wise, that a simple artificer should sustain the most cruel torments with patience and serenity, not only in defence of divine truth, but also of common sense; while the most dignified characters in the kingdom, and among these, the prince of Wales, afterwards the renowned Henry V. gloried in defending one of the most egregious absurdities that ever

disgraced the human understanding. What are all his victories and triumphs, of which English history is so proud, compared with the grace which appeared in Badby? The man suffered in the year 1409.

The conflict was now grown serious, and it behoved Henry to exercise the most rigorous measures of prevention, if he intended to repress all innovation, and to protect the established ecclesiastical system. Accordingly, he published a severe statute, by which grievous pains and penalties were to be inflicted on all, who should dare to defend or encourage the tenets of Wickliff; and this, in conjunction with a constitution of Arundel, too tedious to be recited, seemed to threaten the total extinction of the heresy so called. The persecutors were extremely active; and many persons through fear recanted; but worthies were, still found, who continued faithful unto death.

In the year 1418 died Henry IV.—His successor Henry V. trode in his steps, and countenanced Arundel, in his plans of extirpating the Lollards, and of supporting the existing hierarchy by penal coercion. In the first year of the new king's reign, this archbishop collected in St. Paul's Church at London, a universal synod of all the bishops and clergy of England. The principal object of the assembly was to repress the growing sect; and, as Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, had on all occasions discovered a partiality for these reformers, the resentment of the archbishop and of the whole body of the clergy, were particularly levelled at this nobleman. Certainly at that time, no man in England was more obnoxious to the ecclesiastics. For he made no secret of his opinions. He had very much distinguished himself in opposing the abuses of popery. At a great expence, he had collected, transcribed, and dispersed, the works of Wickliff among the common people without reserve; and it was well known that he maintained a great number of itinerant preachers in many parts of the country, particularly in the dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester, London and Hereford.*

But Lord Cobham was a favourite both of the king and of the people; and therefore to effect his destruction was an undertaking that required much caution.—The archbishop however was in earnest, and he concerted his measures with prudence.

His first step was to procure the royal mandate for sending commissioners to Oxford, whose business should be to examine and report the progress of heresy.—These commissioners are, by Mr. Fox, not improperly called, "the twelve inquisitors of heresies." The issue of their inquiries proved

* Fox, p. 587.

† Wilkins, Convoe. p. 254—260.

‡ Fox, p. 594, and Wilkins, p. 286.

* Wilkins, p. 314. Constitut. Arundel ex MS. Lamb.

† Fox, p. 635. Walden contra Walsley. Goodwin's Henry V.

highly ungrateful to the hierarchy. They found Oxford overrun with heretics: They were, indeed, respectfully received by the rulers of the university, but the opinions of Wickliff had made their way among the junior students; and the talents and integrity of their master were held in high esteem and admiration by his disciples. This information, with many other minute particulars, Arundel laid before the grand convocation, who, after long debates, determined that, without delay, the Lord Cobham should be prosecuted as a heretic. Him they considered as the great offender: To his influence they described the growth of heresy: He was not only, they said, an avowed heretic himself; but, by stipends encouraged scholars from Oxford to propagate his opinions, many of which, were in direct opposition to the sentiments of the holy church of Rome; and lastly, he employed the disciples of Wickliff in preaching, though they had not obtained the licenses of their respective bishops for that purpose. With great solemnity, a copy of each of Wickliff's works was publicly burnt, by the enraged archbishop, in the presence of the nobility, clergy, and people; and it happened that one of the books burnt on this occasion, had belonged to Lord Cobham. This circumstance tended much to confirm the assembly in their belief that, that nobleman was a great encouragement of the Lollards.¹

At the moment when the convocation seemed almost in a flame, and were vowing vengeance against Lord Cobham, some of the more cool and discreet members are said to have suggested the propriety of sounding how the young king would relish the measures they had in view, before they should proceed any further.—Arundel instantly saw the wisdom of this advice, and he resolved to follow it.

For the purpose of giving weight to his proceedings, this artful primate, at the head of a great number of dignified ecclesiastics, complained most grievously to Henry, of the heretical practices of his favourite servant Lord Cobham, and intreated his majesty to consent to the prosecution of so incorrigible an offender.

The affections of the king appear to have been, in some measure, already alienated from this unfortunate nobleman: Mr. Fox observes,² that he gently listened to those "blood-thirsty prelates, and far otherwise than became his princely dignity."—But there is a circumstance, which seems to have escaped the notice of this diligent searcher into ancient records. Through the management of the archbishop, the king's mind was previously impressed with strong suspicions

of Lord Cobham's heresy and enmity to the church. That very book above mentioned, which was said to belong to this excellent man, and which the convocation condemned to the flames, was read aloud before the king, the bishops and the temporal peers of the realm: And the fragment of the account of these proceedings informs us, that Henry was exceedingly shocked at the recital; and declared that, in his life, he never heard such horrid heresy.³ However, in consideration of the high birth, military rank, and good services of Sir John Oldcastle, the king enjoined the convocation to deal favourably with him, and to desist from all further process for some days: He wished to restore him to the unity of the church without rigour or disgrace; and he promised, that he himself, in the mean time, would send privately for the honourable knight, and endeavour to persuade him to renounce his errors.

The king kept his promise, and is said to have used every argument he could think of, to convince him of the high offence of separating from the church; and at last, to have pathetically exhorted him to retract and submit, as an obedient child to his holy mother. The answer of the knight is very expressive of the frank and open intrepidity which distinguished his character. "You I am always most ready to obey," said he, "because you are the appointed minister of God, and bear the sword for the punishment of evil-doers. But, as to the pope and the spiritual dominion, I owe them no obedience, nor will I pay them any; for as sure as God's word is true, to me it is fully evident, that the pope of Rome is the great antichrist, foretold in holy writ, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place."—The extreme ignorance of Henry in matters of religion, by no means disposed him to relish such an answer as this: he immediately turned away from him in visible displeasure, and gave up the disciple of Wickliff to the malice of his enemies.⁴

Arundel, supported by the sovereign power, sent a citation to the castle of Cowling, where Lord Cobham then resided. But feudal ideas were at that time no less fashionable than those of ecclesiastical domination. The high spirited nobleman availed himself of his privileges, and refused admission to the messenger. The archbishop then cited him,⁵ by letters affixed to the great gates of the cathedral of Rochester; but Lord Cobham still disregarded the mandate. Arundel, in a rage, excommunicated him for contumacy, and demanded the aid of the civil power to apprehend him.

Cobham, alarmed at length at the ap-

¹ Fox, p. 636. Collier, p. 632. Wilkin's Conscience, p. 552.
² Fox, *ibid*.

³ Fragmentum Convoc. Cantuar. ARUND. p. 552.
⁴ Fox, *ibid*. Goodwin, Henry V. p. 325.
⁵ Citatio Arund. Wilkin, p. 552.

proaching storm, put in writing a confession of his faith, delivered it to the king, and intreated his majesty to judge for himself, whether he had merited all this rough treatment. The king coldly ordered the written confession to be delivered to the archbishop. Lord Cobham then offered to bring a hundred knights, who would bear testimony to the innocence of his life and opinions. When these expedients had failed; he assumed a higher strain, and begged that he might be permitted, as was usual in less matters, to vindicate his innocence by the law of arms. He said he was ready, "in the quarrel of his faith," to fight for life or death, with any man living,—the king and the lords of his council being excepted.

Nothing can be said by way of extenuating so gross an absurdity, except that he had been educated in the military habits of the fourteenth century. And such was the wretched state of society in the reign of Henry V., whose history we are accustomed to read with so much pride and admiration, that no method of defence remained for this christian hero, but what was as contrary to all ideas of justice and equity, as that by which he was persecuted. In the issue, Cobham was arrested by the king's express order, and lodged in the tower of London. The very zealous and honest Mr. Fox,^a gives the following account of his first examination.

On the day appointed, Thomas Arundel, the archbishop, "sitting in Caiaphas' room, in the chapter-house at St. Pauls," with the bishops of London and Winchester, Sir Robert Morley brought personally before him Lord Cobham, and left him there for the time. Sir, said the primate, you stand here, both detected of heresies, and also excommunicated for contumacy. Notwithstanding we have, as yet, neither shown ourselves unwilling to give you absolution, nor yet do to this hour, provided you would meekly ask for it.

Lord Cobham took no notice of this offer, but desired permission to read an account of his faith, which had long been settled, and which he intended to stand to.—He then took out of his bosom a certain writing respecting the articles whereof he was accused, and when he had read it, he delivered the same to the archbishop.

The contents of the paper were, in substance, these.

1. That the most worshipful sacrament of the altar is Christ's body in the form of bread.

2. That every man, who would be saved, must forsake sin, and do penance for sins already committed, with true and very sincere contrition.

3. That images might be allowable to represent and give men lively ideas of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the martyrdom and good lives of saints; but, that if any man gave that worship to dead images which was due only to God, or put such hope or trust in the help of them as he should do in God, he became a grievous idolater.

4. That the matter of pilgrimages might be settled in few words.—A man may spend all his days in pilgrimages, and lose his soul at last: but he, that knows the holy commandments of God and keepeth them to the end, shall be saved, though he never visited the shrines of saints, as men now do in their pilgrimages to Canterbury, Rome, and other places.

Then the archbishop informed the prisoner, that, though there were many good things contained in his paper, he had not been sufficiently explicit respecting several other articles of belief; and that upon these also his opinion would be expected.—As a direction to his faith, he promised to send him, in writing, the clear determinations of the church; and he warned him very particularly, to attend to this point;—namely whether, in the sacrament of the altar, the material bread did, or did not, remain, after the words of consecration.

The gross superstition and unscriptural notions of the church at that time, are strikingly exhibited in this authentic determination of the primate and clergy, which, according to promise, was sent to the Lord Cobham in the tower.

1. The faith and determination of the holy church, touching the blissful sacrament of the altar is this, that after the sacramental words be once spoken, by a priest in his mass, "the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ's very body; and the material wine, that was before wine, is turned into Christ's very blood." And so there remaineth, thenceforth, neither material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken.

2. Every christian man living here bodily on earth, ought to confess to a priest ordained by the church if he can come to him.

3. Christ ordained St. Peter to be his vicar here on earth, whose See is the holy church of Rome: And he granted that the same power, which he gave to Peter, should succeed to all Peter's successors; whom we now call popes of Rome;...and whom christian men ought to obey, after the laws of the church of Rome.

4. Lastly, Holy Church hath determined, that it is meritorious to a christian man to go on a pilgrimage to holy places; and there to worship holy reliques, and images of saints, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, approved by the church of Rome.

On Monday, the day appointed for the next examination, Arundel accosted Lord Cobham with an appearance of great mildness, and put him in mind that, on the preceding Saturday, he had informed him, he was, "accused for contumacy and disobedience to the holy church;" and had expected he would at that time have meekly requested absolution. The archbishop then declared, that even now it was not too late to make the same request,—provided it was made in due form, as the church had ordained.

Amidst this very interesting narrative, let not my reader for a moment forget, that his historian is always in quest of evidences of the true faith of the gospel, exemplified in practice. The trial of Lord Cobham, though in many points of view, a gloomy tale, affords a remarkable and a very satisfactory evidence of this sort. This exemplary knight appears to have possessed the humility of a christian, as well as the spirit of a soldier: for, he not only faithfully protested against the idolatry of the times, the fictitious absolutions, and various corruptions of popery, by which the creatures of the pope extorted the greatest part of the wealth of the kingdom; but, he also openly made such penitential declarations, and affecting acknowledgments of having personally broken God's commandments, as imply much salutary self-knowledge and self-abasement; strong convictions of sin, and bitter sorrow for the same, together with a firm reliance on the mercy of God through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

"I never yet trespassed against you, said this intrepid servant of God; and therefore I do not feel the want of your absolution."—He then kneeled down on the pavement; and lifting up his hands to heaven, he said, "I confess myself here unto thee, my eternal living God, that I have been a grievous sinner: How often in my frail youth have I offended thee by ungoverned passions, pride, concupiscence, intemperance! How often have I been drawn into horrible sin by anger, and how many of my fellow creatures have I injured from this cause? Good Lord, I humbly ask thee mercy: here I need absolution."

With tears in his eyes, he then stood up, and with a loud voice cried out, "Lo! these are your guides, good people. Take notice; for the violation of God's holy law and his great commandments they never cursed me; but, for their own arbitrary appointments and traditions, they most cruelly treat me and other men. Let them, however, remember, that Christ's denunciations against the Pharisees, shall all be fulfilled."

The dignity of his manner, and the vehemence of his expression, threw the court into some confusion. After the primate had recovered himself, he proceeded to examine the prisoner respecting the doctrine of transubstantiation.* "Do you believe, that after the words of consecration there remains any MATERIAL bread?" "The scriptures, said Cobham, make no mention of MATERIAL bread; I believe, that Christ's body remains in the FORM of bread. In the sacrament there is both Christ's body and the bread: the bread is the thing that we see with our eyes; but the body of Christ is hid, and only to be seen by faith." Upon which, with one voice, they cried, Heresy! Heresy! One of the bishops in particular said vehemently, "That it was a foul heresy to call it bread." Cobham answered smartly, "St. Paul, the apostle, was as wise a man as you, and perhaps as good a christian; and yet he calls it BREAD. The bread, saith he, that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? To be short with you; I believe the Scriptures most cordially, but I have no belief in your lordly laws and idle determinations: ye are no part of Christ's holy church, as your deeds do plainly shew." Doctor Walden, the prior of the Carmelites, and Wickliff's great enemy, now lost all patience; and exclaimed, "what rash and desperate people are these followers of Wickliff!"

Before God and man, replied Cobham, I solemnly here profess, that till I knew Wickliff, whose judgment ye so highly disdain, I never abstained from sin; but after I became acquainted with that virtuous man and his despised doctrines, it hath been otherwise with me;—so much grace could I never find in all your pompous instructions."

"It were hard," said Walden, "that in an age of so many learned instructors, you should have had no grace to amend your life, till you heard the devil preach."

"Your fathers," said Cobham, "the old pharisees, ascribed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub, and his doctrines to the devil. Go on; and, like them, ascribe every good thing to the devil. Go on, and pronounce every man a heretic, who rebukes your vicious lives. Pray, what warrant have you from scripture for this very act you are now about? Where is it written in all God's law that you may thus sit in judgement upon the life of man? Hold—perhaps you will quote Annas and Caiaphas, who sat upon Christ and his apostles!"

"Yes, Sir," said one of the doctor's of law, "and Christ too, for he judged JUDAS."

"I never heard that he did," said Lord Cobham. "Judas judged himself, and thereupon went out and hanged himself. Indeed Christ pronounced a woe against him, for his

* The learned reader cannot fail to observe, that both Wickliff and his followers, seem sometimes to lean, to the notion of consubstantiation.

covetousness, as he 'dees still against you, who follow Judas' steps."

The examinations of Lord Cobham are unmeasurably prolix. I have, therefore, chosen to select such passages from the tedious accounts,* as might best indicate the real dispositions of this DEFENDER OF THE FAITH. Though intrepid and high spirited to the last, he appears not to have given his enemies any advantage over him by using rude and coarse language, or by bursts of passion. The proud and ferocious spirit of an ill educated soldier seems to have been melted down into the meekness and humility of the christian. His reproof of his judges was severe, but perfectly just: His deep and animated confession of his sins is both affecting and instructive; and his bold testimony, in those trying moments, to the virtues and excellencies of a character so obnoxious to his ecclesiastical judges as that of Wickliff, is exceedingly honourable to the memory both of the master and the scholar. I need not add,—the same testimony covers their cruel and relentless adversaries with shame and disgrace.

We have seen, that Lord Cobham, in the process of his trial, hinted at the lessons of divine grace, which he had learnt in the school of Wickliff. The intimation is by no means obscure; yet every pious reader, at the same time that he is delighted with finding this evidence of the sound christianity of Cobham, will lament with me, that there is not, on record, a larger and more distinct account both of his conversation and of his private life and conversation. Such an account would give us a clear insight into the religious character of this disciple of Wickliff, and might probably throw more light also on the practical tenets of that early reformer.

But we must be thankful for the documents we have. That distinct and impressive declaration of Lord Cobham, concerning the change in his life from sin to the service of the living God, when we reflect on the awful and peculiar circumstances in which it was made, is in itself an inestimable fragment of ecclesiastical biography.—This is that testimony of experience, which invincibly confirms every real christian in the belief of the truth of the doctrine, which he has been taught. He may be baffled in argument by men more acute and sagacious than himself; he may be erroneous in many less matters; he may want both learning and eloquence to defend that which he believes; but the doctrines of grace he knows to be of God, by the change which they have wrought in his soul. In this proof he knows all other views of religion, whether nominally christian or not, do totally fail.

At the conclusion of this long and iniquitous trial, the behaviour of Lord Cobham was perfectly consistent with the temper he had exhibited during the course of it. There remained the same undaunted courage and resolution, and the same christian serenity and resignation.—Some of the last questions which were put to him, respected the worship of the cross; and his answers prove that neither the acuteness of his genius was blunted, nor the solidity of his judgment impaired.

One of the friars asked him, whether he was ready to worship the cross upon which Christ died.

Where is it, said Lord Cobham?

But suppose it was here at this moment? said the friar.

A wise man indeed, said Cobham, to put me such a question; and yet he himself does not know where the thing is! But, tell me, I pray, what sort of worship do I owe to it?

One of the conclave answered; such worship as St. Paul speaks of, when he says, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Right, replied Cobham, and stretched out his arms, THAT is the true and the very cross;—far better than your cross of wood.

Sir, said the bishop of London, you know very well that Christ died upon a MATERIAL cross.

True, said Cobham; and I know also that our salvation did not come by that material cross; but by him who died thereupon. Further, I know well that St. Paul rejoiced in no other cross, but in Christ's passion and death only, and in his own sufferings and persecutions, for the same truth which Christ had died for before."

Mr. Fox's account of these transactions, collected from ancient manuscripts, does not, in general, differ materially from the archbishop's own registers of the proceedings of the convocation. But there are some circumstances noted by Mr. Fox, which we may well suppose to have been designedly omitted in the registers last-mentioned. For example, Mr. Fox informs us that the court were so amazed at the spirit and resolution of the Lord Cobham, as well as at the quickness and pertinence of his answers, that they were reduced to a stand, "their wits and sophistry so failed them that day."

From Arundel's own reports it is sufficiently clear, that it was the custom of that artful primate to make, on these occasions, a great external show of lenity and kindness to the prisoners, at the very moment in which he was exercising towards them the most unrelenting barbarity. I observe in the case of William Sawtre, whose martyrdom we have already concisely related,* that

* I generally give the very words; though sometimes, for the sake of brevity, only the substance; and sometimes I put a modern phrase in the place of one now antiquated.

* Fox, p. 642. Convoc. prelat. Wilkins, p. 356.
* See p. 613.

when the archbishop degraded that faithful clergyman, pronounced him an incorrigible heretic, and delivered him to the secular power, he then, with the most consummate hypocrisy, requested the mayor and sheriffs of London, to treat their prisoner **KINDLY**, though he well knew they would dare to shew him no other kindness, than that of burning him to ashes.

So in the trial of Lord Cobham, nothing could exceed the mild and affable deportment of Arundel during the course of the examinations. The registers of Lambeth palace inform us, that the archbishop repeatedly made use of the most "gentle, modest, and sweet terms," in addressing the prisoner; that with mournful looks he intreated him to return into the bosom of the church; and that after he had found all his endeavours in vain, he was compelled with the bitterest sorrow to proceed to a definitive sentence.

"The day," said Arundel, "passes away fast, we must come to a conclusion." He then, for the last time, desired Lord Cobham, to weigh well the dilemma in which he stood: "You must either submit," said he, "to the ordinances of the church, or abide the dangerous consequences."

Lord Cobham then said expressly before the whole court, "My faith is fixed,—do with me what you please."

The primate, without further delay, judged, and pronounced, Sir John Oldcastle, the Lord Cobham, to be an incorrigible, pernicious, and detestable, heretic; and having condemned him as such, he delivered him to the secular jurisdiction.*

Lord Cobham, with a most cheerful countenance, said, "Though ye condemn my body which is but a wretched thing, yet I am well assured ye can do no harm to my soul, any more than could Satan to the soul of Job. He, that created it, will of his infinite mercy save it. Of this I have no manner of doubt. And in regard to the articles of my belief, I will stand to them, even to my very death, **BY THE GRACE OF THE ETERNAL GOD.**" He then turned to the people, and stretching out his hands, cried with a very loud voice, "Good christian people! for God's love, be well aware of these men; else, they will beguile you, and lead you blindfold into hell with themselves." Having said these words, he fell down upon his knees, and lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, he prayed for his enemies in the following words, "Lord God Eternal! I beseech thee of thy great mercy to forgive my persecutors, if it be thy blessed will!"

He was then sent back to the tower under the care of Sir Robert Morley.

I was not surprised to find that, in Arundel's own report of this sad transaction, Lord

Cobham's prayer for his enemies is entirely omitted.† But the preceding address of this nobleman to the people, and his caution to them to beware of their blind guides, is, by the primate, placed immediately **BEFORE** the passing of the definitive sentence of condemnation. Mr. Fox, in his account, places that address immediately **AFTER** the sentence, and seems to have thought Arundel's representation of this circumstance incorrect, for he pointedly tells us that, respecting this very matter, his own two copies of these proceedings agreed with each other.‡

Though the ecclesiastical judges of Lord Cobham, by condemning him as a heretic, and delivering him to the secular power for the execution of their sentence, appear to have done their utmost to complete the destruction of the man whom they feared and hated, there is yet reason to believe that both the king and the archbishop remained in some perplexity respecting this business. In religious concerns, this able monarch seems to have entirely resigned his understanding to the direction of the clergy; and therefore we need not wonder that he was highly provoked with Lord Cobham for his opposition to the church, and still more for his incurable obstinacy, in adhering to heretical sentiments, after that his sovereign had personally condescended to persuade him to recant.—Yet, after all, it is not improbable that such a prince as Henry V. should still retain some esteem for the character of the prisoner in the tower, who on many occasions had formerly distinguished himself by his valour and military talents.—Though the memory of Henry is by no means free from the imputation of cruelty, it must at least be admitted, that the present situation of Cobham was likely to soften animosity, and to revive in the king's mind any latent affection for his favourite:—Even Walsingham, a bigotted papist, and bitter enemy of the Lollards, though in many respects a very useful historian, says, that Cobham, "for his integrity, was dearly beloved by the king."[§]

This same ancient historian informs us, that the archbishop in person went to the king and requested his majesty to postpone, for the space of fifty days, the punishment of Lord Cobham.^{||}—If this be true, the motives of Arundel can be no great mystery. The persecution of this virtuous knight was a most unpopular step. His rank and character, and his zeal for the doctrines of Wickliff, had pointed him out to the primate as a proper victim of ecclesiastical severity; but his condemnation involved, in a general odium, the rulers of the church who had been his judges.—It was necessary therefore to

* Acts Convoc. prov. Cantuar. Arundel, 18.

† Fox, p. 643.

‡ Regi propter probitatem charus et acceptus. Walsingham, Henry V.

§ Page 385.

* Wilkin's Concil. p. 200. Fox, p. 589.

† Rymer, Vol. IX. p. 61—66. Fox, p. 642 and 643.

temporize a little; and before the whole sect of the Lollards were to be terrified by the public execution of a person so highly esteemed as Lord Cobham, it was thought expedient to employ a few weeks in lessening his credit among the people by a variety of scandalous aspersions.—Mr. Fox assures us, that his adversaries scrupled not to publish a recantation in his name; and that Lord Cobham directed a paper to be posted up in his own defence, and in contradiction to the slander.

But, whether the lenity of the king, or the politic caution of the clergy, was the true cause of the delay, it is certain, that Lord Cobham was not put to death immediately after being condemned for a heretic. He remained some weeks in the tower, and at length by unknown means made his escape: So that it is now impossible to say, whether the clergy would ultimately have pressed the sovereign to proceed to extremities in this instance, or, whether Henry could have been induced to commit to the flames, for heresy, a favourite of such exalted rank and high reputation. For as yet, there had not been any instance of a nobleman suffering in that ignominious manner.

After Lord Cobham had escaped out of the tower, he is said to have taken the advantage of a dark night, evaded pursuit, and arrived safe in Wales, where he concealed himself more than four years.* If he had remained in prison, he would have effectually prevented the calumny, with which the papists have endeavoured to load his memory; nevertheless, when we reflect on the intrepid spirit of the man, his unshaken resolution, and the cruel, unjust treatment he met with, we cannot wonder at his eagerness to fly from those flames, which his persecutors ardently longed to kindle. It seems as easy to comprehend Lord Cobham's motives for wishing to escape, as it is difficult to censure them.

The clergy were not a little mortified to find, that this grand heretic and destined victim, had slipped out of their hands; and their uneasiness was increased, by observing that the king discovered no anxiety to have Lord Cobham retaken. Soon after this event, however, a very remarkable transaction afforded them every advantage they could wish to gratify their resentment against the NOBLE CHIEF of the Lollards. These peaceable and truly christian subjects had been accustomed to assemble in companies for the purposes of devotion; but the bishops represented their meetings as of a seditious tendency, and they found no great difficulty in obtaining a royal proclamation^d for suppressing the conventicles of persons who were supposed to be ill inclined to the go-

vernment. Historians have observed that "jealousy was the ruling foible of the house of Lancaster;" and though Henry V. was, naturally, of a noble and magnanimous temper, he could never forget that he was an usurper:—His suspicions of the evil designs of the Lollards increased to a high degree: He thought it necessary to watch them as his greatest enemies; and he appears to have listened to every calumny, which the zeal and hatred of the hierarchy could invent or propagate against the unfortunate followers of Wickliff.

The royal proclamation, however, did not put an end to the assemblies of the Lollards. Like the primitive christians, they met in smaller companies, and more privately, and often in the dead of night. St. Giles's fields, then a thicket, was a place of frequent resort on these occasions. And here a number of them assembled in the evening of January the sixth, 1414; with an intention, as was usual, of continuing together to a very late hour.

The king was then at Eltham, a few miles from London. He received intelligence, that Lord Cobham, at the head of twenty thousand of his party, was stationed in St. Giles's fields, for the purpose of seizing the person of the king, putting their persecutors to the sword, and making himself the regent of the realm.

The mind of Henry, we have seen, had been prepared, by the diligent and artful representations of the clergy, to receive any impressions against the Lollards, which might tend to fix upon that persecuted sect the charges of seditious or treasonable practices. To his previous suspicions, therefore, as well as to the gallantry of his temper, we are to ascribe the extraordinary resolution, which the king took on this occasion. He suddenly armed the few soldiers he could muster, put himself at their head, and marched to the place. He attacked the Lollards, and soon put them into confusion. About twenty were killed, and sixty taken.^e Among these was one Beverley, their preacher, who with two others, Sir Roger Acton, and John Brown, was afterwards put to death. The king marched on, but found no more bodies of men. He thought he had surprised only the advanced guard, whereas he had routed the whole army!!

This extraordinary affair is represented by the popish writers as a real conspiracy; and it has given them occasion to talk loudly against the tenets of the reformers, which could encourage such crimes. Mr. Hume, also, has enlisted himself on the same side of the question; and, in the most peremptory and decisive manner, has pronounced Lord Cobham guilty of high treason.^f

* Bale. Gilpin.

^d Rymer, Vol. IX.

^e Rapin, Henry V.

^f Hume, Henry V.

After what has been so lately observed concerning the lamentable prejudices of this most valuable historian, little more can now be necessary, than barely to put the reader in mind, that Cobham and many of the Lollards evidently belonged to the true church of Christ, and bore with patience the cross of their Master. We may briefly add, that the ingenious, and on many occasions, the sceptical Mr. Hume, instead of affirming that "the treasonable designs of the sect were rendered certain both from evidence, and from the confessions of the criminals themselves," would have done better to have recollected that the testimony of Walsingham, a violent partisan, merits, in this particular instance, very little attention. When I had reviewed Mr. Fox's able and satisfactory vindication of Lord Cobham, I was astonished at the positiveness of our elegant historian Mr. Hume, in this matter. The martyrologist, with great diligence and judgment, has examined all the authentic documents, and argued most powerfully against the supposition of any conspiracy. Mr. Hume, on the contrary, gives implicit credit to the most improbable accounts;^a and he could not but know that the Lollards had not then a friend on earth.

Though the entire combination of church and state, in the reign of Henry V., against this religious sect, prevents us from being furnished with positive and direct proof of their innocence, the reader, after what has been stated, will be disposed, no doubt, to acquit them of all treasonable views in the affair of St. Giles's fields. And this persuasion will be strengthened by considering that this is the only instance on record, in which they have been accused of turbulent or seditious behaviour. The Lollards are described, in general, as having been always peaceable and submissive to authority.

Rapin observes,^b that the persons assembled on that occasion, "had unhappily brought arms with them for their defence, in case they should be attacked by their persecutors."—If we regulate our judgments according to modern notions and habits, this circumstance must appear very suspicious;—not so,—if we recollect that the practice of providing arms for the purpose of self-defence, was by no means an unusual precaution in those violent times.

Neither ought much stress to be laid on the confession of several, who were made prisoners by the king. Among those that were taken, says the historian last-mentioned, there were some, who, "gained by promises, or awed by threats, confessed whatever their enemies desired."—Besides, it is extremely probable, that popish emissaries mixed themselves among the Lollards, for

the express purpose of being brought to confession; and it has been well observed, that most likely, the very persons, who pretended to find arms on the field, could have best pointed out the original concealers of them.

Nothing can be more judicious than Rapin's observations on this whole transaction. "It is hardly to be conceived," says this historian, "that a prince so wise as Henry, could suffer himself to be imposed on by so gross a fiction. Had he found, indeed, as he was made to believe, twenty thousand men in arms in St. Giles's fields, it would have been very suspicious; but, that fourscore or a hundred men, among whom there was not a single person of rank, should have formed such a project, is extremely improbable. Besides he himself knew Sir John Oldcastle to be a man of sense; and yet nothing could be more wild than the project fathered upon him;—a project, which it was supposed he was to execute with a handful of men, without being present himself, and without its being known where he was, or that there was any other leader in his room. Notwithstanding the strictest search made through the kingdom to discover the accomplices of this pretended conspiracy; not a SINGLE person could be found besides those taken at St. Giles's. Lastly, the principles of the Lollards were very far from allowing such barbarities. It is therefore more than probable, that the accusation was forged, to render the Lollards odious to the king, with a view to gain his licence for their persecution."

The conduct of those in power in the church at that time was so completely flagitious and unprincipled, that it is impossible to review their usual mode of proceeding against those, whom they termed heretics, without entertaining suspicions similar to those, which have occurred to Rapin;—suspicions of forged accusations and of pretended or extorted confessions.—This consideration adds much weight to the solid reasonings of this very candid and upright historian.

It has been supposed that, in process of time, the king disbelieved the report of any actual conspiracy, in this transaction: and it must be confessed, that when we reflect on the great understanding and military skill of this prince, it seems extraordinary, that he should not at the first have reflected, that the very marshalling of such a number of soldiers, and the furnishing of them with necessities, could never have been managed with secrecy. He appears, however, to have given sufficient credit to the calumny to answer all the designs of the ecclesiastical rulers. He became thoroughly incensed against the Lollards, and particularly against the Lord Cobham. A bill of attainder against that unfortunate nobleman, passed the commons, through the royal influence;^c The

^a Such are the accounts of Hall, &c.

^b History of England, Henry V.

^c Gilpin.

king set a price of a thousand marks upon his head, and promised a perpetual exemption from taxes to any town, that should secure him.¹

It was to be expected that these strong measures, aided by the active zeal and unrelenting hatred of his enemies, should be effective to the discovery of Lord Cobham; and, it is matter of some surprise, how he was able, for several years, to elude the vigilance of the many, who narrowly watched him. Wales was his asylum; and he is supposed to have frequently changed the scene of his retreat. Through the diligence of Lord Powis, and his dependants, he was at length discovered and taken.—It was on the tenth of October, 1418, that Lord Cobham was, by Arundel, condemned as a heretic and sent to the tower: The affair of St. Giles's happened on the evening of the sixth of January, 1414; and it was not till nearly the end of the year 1417, that this persecuted christian was apprehended and brought to London.

His fate was soon determined.—He was dragged into St. Giles's fields with all the insult and barbarity of enraged superstition; and there, both as a traitor and a heretic, he was suspended alive in chains, upon a gallows, and burnt to death.

This excellent man, by a slight degree of dissimulation, might have softened his adversaries, and have escaped a troublesome persecution and a cruel death. But, sincerity is essential to a true servant of Jesus Christ; and Lord Cobham died, as he had lived,—in the faith and hope of the gospel; and bearing, to the end, a noble testimony to his genuine doctrines; and “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”²

One of Lord Cobham's very great admirers has said, that the novelty of Wickliff's opinions first engaged his curiosity; that he examined them as a philosopher, and in the course of his examination became a christian.

I know not upon what ground this is affirmed; but, it might be so; nevertheless I feel assured that if we had Lord Cobham's own account of his conversion, this representation of the matter would appear, at least, very defective; moreover, from the little which he did say, on his trial, respecting Wickliff's doctrines, and from the very feeling manner in which he appears to have delivered that little, I think it extremely probable, that the preaching and expounding of the true gospel of Christ, by Wickliff and his disciples, had been the means of affecting the conscience of this worthy personage, and of convincing him of sin. This has been found the usual way in

which the Spirit of God operates salutary changes on the minds of fallen creatures.—The philosophical method has a plausible appearance, but fails in practice.

Lord Cobham is allowed to have been a man of learning; and his knowledge of the holy scriptures is incontestable.—The aptness of his quotations, and his promptitude in producing scriptural arguments, were displayed in a very striking manner, through the whole course of his examination before the bishops.——At the time when he was seized and made prisoner in Wales, Henry V. was making conquests in Normandy; and a parliament was then sitting in London, for the purpose of supplying the sovereign with money to carry on his war.—The records of that parliament inform us, that on the eighteenth of December, 1413, Sir John Oldcastle was brought before the lords, and that he made no answer to the crimes laid to his charge.³ No doubt he was thoroughly convinced, that all attempts to exculpate himself would be vain and fruitless. The clergy, during the last three or four years, had gained a complete ascendancy both in parliament and in the cabinet; Arundel died in 1414; and was succeeded by Chicheley, who soon shewed himself to be a primate, both of more art and ability, and also of more zeal and courage than his predecessor. Ecclesiastical tyranny and superstition seemed now at their height; and it required much less sagacity than that of Lord Cobham, to see two things distinctly; 1st, That in the present circumstances any witnesses, which he could produce, would be overawed or disregarded amidst the imprecations of the priests and monks; and 2dly, That a close and cruel confederacy of power, prejudice and resentment, would be impenetrable to argument and eloquence.

It was now, therefore, become the duty of Lord Cobham, patiently to resign himself to the will of his Maker, and to seek for comfort by meditations on the sacred scriptures. That he did so, I collect with no small satisfaction, from a single expression of the ancient memorialist, Walsingham, which does not appear to have been taken notice of by succeeding writers.—This author informs us that, the prisoner was examined in the presence of the duke of Bedford, then regent of England; and being pressed closely to give answers respecting the insurrection in St. Giles's fields, and his other treasonable offences,—his reply, after a short pause, was, “With me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment:”⁴ and then, says, the scornful annalist, he again proceeded to FRANK RESENTMENT.⁵

¹ Cotton's Abridgment.

² 1 Cor. iv. 3d. verse.

³ Et iterum impudenter garrulissime cepit, dicitur—Walsingham, p. 400.

⁴ Raph. Rymor.
⁵ See page 617.

⁶ Heb. xiv. 25.

Yet this,—the reader should remember,—is the very author, on whose assertions principally, Mr. Hume grounded his belief, that Lord Cobham was guilty of treason. We have before observed,¹ that, on that question, our elegant historian appears to have been credulous in the extreme; and, as he had no great taste for scriptural quotations, it is by no means improbable, that he also further agreed with Walsingham in blaming the prisoner for his “impertinent garrulity.” Serious persons, however, who listen with reverence to the written word of God, will view the matter in a different light. That such a passage of scripture should have been actually quoted by Lord Cobham, then in the power of enraged and merciless adversaries, seems to be extremely likely; and not the less so, because recorded by Walsingham, a violent and prejudiced enemy of all the Lollards.—In regard to the quotation itself,—by suggesting the littleness and insignificance of all HUMAN judgments and determinations, in comparison of the DIVINE, it conveyed a wise and salutary admonition to the existing hierarchy, who, at that moment, were uncommonly inflated with dominion and “drunken with the blood of the saints;”² and at the same time, it must have produced in the minds of all, who HAD EARS TO HEAR, a strong conviction of this important truth,—that the knight, who was thus persecuted for righteousness sake, had made no rash choice in renouncing the love of the world, and thereby demonstrating that the love of the Father was in him.³ Every pious christian will, I doubt not, accord with me in these ideas; and be gratified to find, that “MAN’S JUDGMENT,” however severe and cruel, was “a very small thing,” in Lord Cobham’s estimation; and that when all earthly supports must have failed, this martyr for the gospel of Christ, steadily fixed his eye on GOD’S JUDGMENT, and derived all his hope and comfort from that single source.

At the time of his execution, many persons of rank and distinction were present; and the ecclesiastics are said to have laboured to the utmost to prevent the people from praying for him. Lord Cobham, however, resigned himself to a painful and ignominious death, “with the utmost bravery and most triumphant joy, exhorting the people to follow the instructions which God had given them in the scriptures; and to disclaim those false teachers, whose lives and conversation were so contrary to Christ and his religion.”⁴

Henry Chicheley, now archbishop of Canterbury, continued at the head of that See, from February 1414, to April 1443.⁵ This man deserves to be called the firebrand of the

age in which he lived. To subvert the purposes of his own pride and tyranny, he engaged king Henry in his famous contest with France, by which a prodigious carnage was made of the human race, and the most dreadful miseries were brought upon both kingdoms. But Henry was a soldier, and understood the art of war, though perfectly ignorant of religion; and that ardour of spirit, which, in youth, had spent itself in vicious excesses, was now employed, under the management of Chicheley, in desolating France, by one of the most unjust wars ever waged by ambition, and in furnishing for vulgar minds matter of declamation on the valour of the English nation. While this scene was carrying on in France, the archbishop at home, partly by exile, partly by forced abjurations, and partly by the flames, domineered over the Lollards; and almost effaced the vestiges of godliness in the kingdom.

This was one of the most gloomy seasons, which the church ever experienced. The doctrines of Wickliff, indeed, had travelled into Bohemia; but, as we shall afterwards see, the fires of persecution were also lighted up in that country, at the same time that in England, no quarter was given to any professors of the pure religion of Christ. Even the duke of Bedford, the brother of the king,⁶ one of the wisest men of his age, thought it no dishonour to be the minister of Chicheley’s cruelties. A chaplain of Lord Cobham, through terror of punishment, was induced to recant his creed: the strictest search was made after Lollards and their books; and, while a few souls, dispersed through various parts, sighed in secret; and detesting the reigning idolatry, worshipped God in spirit and in truth, they yet found no HUMAN consolation or support whatever.—The principal use to be made of these scenes is to excite a spirit of thankfulness for the superior privileges of the times in which we live.

The diocese of Kent, was particularly exposed to the bloody activity of Chicheley. Whole families were obliged to relinquish their places of abode, for the sake of the gospel.

In the midst of these tragedies, and in the year 1422, died Henry V. whose military greatness is known to most readers: His vast capacity and talents for government, have been also justly celebrated. But what is man without the genuine fear of God? This monarch, in the former part of his life, was remarkable for dissipation and extravagance of conduct; in the latter, he became the slave of the popedom; and, for that reason, was called the PRINCE OF PRIESTS. Voluptuousness, ambition, superstition, each in their turn, had the ascendant in this extror-

¹ Page 524.

² Rev. xvii. 6.

³ John ii. 15.

⁴ Lewis’s account of Wickliff’s followers.

⁵ Biograph. Britan. Henry’s Hist. Book V.

dinary character. Such, however, is the dazzling nature of personal bravery and of prosperity, that even the ignorance and folly of the bigot, and the barbarities of the persecutor, are lost or forgotten amidst the enterprises of the hero, and the successes of the conqueror. Reason and justice lift up their voice in vain. The great and substantial defects of Henry V. must hardly be touched on by Englishmen. The battle of Agincourt throws a delusive splendor around the name of this victorious king.

The persecution of the Lollards continued during the minority of Henry VI. William Taylor, a priest, was burnt, because he had asserted, that every prayer, which is a petition for some supernatural gift, is to be directed only to God.* The four orders of friars were directed by the archbishop to examine the man; and they convicted him of heresy for asserting a maxim, which peculiarly distinguishes true religion from idolatry.† Not to dwell on the cases of many persons of less note, who suffered much vexation in this calamitous period of the church, it may be proper to mention William White, who, by reading, writing, and preaching,‡ exerted himself in Norfolk so vigorously, that he was condemned to the stake in 1424. His holy life and blameless manners had rendered him highly venerable in that country. He attempted to speak to the people before his execution, but was prevented. It is remarkable, that his widow, following her husband's footsteps in purity of life and in zeal for the gospel, confirmed many persons in evangelical truth; on which account she was exposed to much trouble from the bishop of Norwich.

Nor did the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, which filled the whole kingdom with confusion, put an end to the persecution of the Lollards. A person, named John Gooze, was burnt at the Tower-hill, in the reign of Edward IV. in the year 1473.‡ This victim was delivered to one of the sheriffs with an order to have him executed in the afternoon. The officer, compassionating the case of his prisoner, took him to his own house, and endeavoured to prevail on him to retract. But the martyr, after listening to a long exhortation, desired him to forbear: and then, in strong terms, requested something to eat, declaring, he was become very hungry. The sheriff complied with his request. "I eat now a good dinner,"—said the man very cheerfully,—"for I shall have a brisk storm to pass through before supper." After he had dined, he gave thanks to God, and desired to be led to the place, where he should give up his soul to his Creator and Redeemer.

The civil contests, with which the king-

dom were convulsed, were at length terminated by the union of the two houses of York and Lancaster, at the accession of Henry VII. But the church of God continued still an unremitted object of persecution. The sufferings of the Lollards were even greater during the established governments of Henry VII. and Henry VIII., than they had been during the civil wars. To give a minute detail of all the horrid cruelties, that were inflicted on those who were condemned as heretics for reading the scriptures, and for denying popish superstitions, is not the object of these memoirs. It may be sufficient to remark, that all, who were convicted of what was then called heresy, and adhered to their opinions, were first condemned as obstinate heretics, afterwards delivered to the secular arm, and lastly burnt to ashes, without mercy, and without exception.¶ Neither age nor sex were spared. Mr. Fox has collected, from the registers of the diocese of Lincoln, for the year 1521, a most shocking catalogue, both of the victims and of their accusers, who suffered under the grievous and cruel persecution of bishop Langland, the king's confessor. He has also, with singular industry, recorded the particular names of many who, through fear of a painful death, renounced their faith during the memorable persecution of that same year.—Upon these unfortunate persons, various penances, and many very severe and ignominious punishments were inflicted: several, who were found to have abjured before, were condemned for relapse and committed to the flames.

A concise account of a person named John Brown, of Ashford in Kent, shall conclude this distressing detail of the sufferings of the Lollards.

This martyr suffered in the year 1511, under the persecution of William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury: He was discovered to be a heretic as follows.¶—A slight altercation had taken place between him and a priest, as they were both passing down to Gravesend, in the common barge.—The priest perceived symptoms of heresy; and immediately upon landing, lodged with the archbishop, an information against Brown.—The man was suddenly apprehended by two of the archbishop's servants, who, by means of assistants, placed him on his own horse, bound his feet under the horse's belly, and carried him to Canterbury, where he remained in confinement forty days; during which time neither his wife, nor any of his friends, could receive the smallest intimation concerning him.

At length he was brought to Ashford, the town where he lived, and placed in the stocks. It was now almost night; but, one

* Fox, p. 749.

† Ibid. p. 752.

‡ Ibid. p. 814.

¶ Henry's Hist. of Britain.

¶ Fox, p. 552.

of his own female domestics, in passing by the place, happened to become acquainted with his situation; and she instantly carried home to her mistress the afflicting news.—His mournful wife sat near her husband all the night, and heard him relate the melancholy story of every thing that had happened to him. The treatment this good man had met with, from Warham, the archbishop of Canterbury and from Fisher,^b bishop of Rochester, was infamous in the extreme. With unparalleled barbarity, they had directed his bare feet to be placed upon hot burning coals; and to be kept there, till they were burnt to the bones. Notwithstanding all this, Brown would not deny his faith, but patiently endured the pain, and continued immovable, fighting manfully the "good fight."—To his wife he then said, "The bishops," good Elizabeth, "have burnt my feet, till I cannot set them on the ground: they have done so to make me deny my Lord; but, I thank God, they will never be able to make me do that; for, if I should deny HIM in this world, he would deny me hereafter. Therefore, I pray thee, continue, as thou hast begun, and bring up thy children in the fear of God. Thy husband is to be consumed at the stake to-morrow."

He was burnt, on Whitsun-even, lifting up his hands, and uttering the most fervent prayers,—particularly the words of the psalmist, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth."

Such were the sanguinary methods by which the prelates of England attempted to extirpate Lollardism and heresy. And they so far succeeded, that the few disciples of Wickliff, who still remained alive, seem to have been afterwards confounded with the favourers of the GRAND REFORMATION: but, in their main object of strengthening the Roman catholic religion, they utterly failed. The burning of heretics was found to be not the way to extinguish heresy. On the contrary, both in England and on the continent,

such detestable cruelty increased the compassion of the people for the sufferers, excited their indignation against the persecutors, and roused a spirit of inquiry and of opposition to the existing hierarchy, which at length, under the direction of a kind, over-ruling providence, proved fatal both to papal corruptions of sound doctrine, and also to papal usurpation of dominion.

When the human mind has been thus fatigued and disgusted with a review of the cruelties of popish persecutors, it is disposed to pronounce the Roman religion wholly a pretence, and all the ecclesiastical judges and rulers of those times, barbarous hypocrites and deceivers. "It is impossible," we are apt to say, "but that natural conscience should have informed them they were doing wrong, in committing to the flames, for slight differences of opinion, so many innocent victims;—nay, often,—persons of the most exemplary life and conversation."—However,

A more cool and sedate reflection may convince us, that though, in all ages, there have existed wicked men of great ability, who have shewn themselves ever ready to sacrifice principle and conscience to their ambition and avarice, and even to wade through much blood in support of their darling objects, yet ALL tormentors of the human race have not been precisely of this class. These are of the first magnitude, and we suppose them to have had their eyes open. But there are others, who knew not what they did; and towards such therefore,—though we are never to defend their faults,—much less to palliate their enormities,—yet we are bound to exercise an equitable discrimination. The reader will understand me to have in view, those deluded votaries, who have had the misfortune to be taught, and the weakness to believe, that the favour of God is to be obtained, chiefly by paying a scrupulous regard to external forms and observances. The following remarkable paragraph is extracted from a popish writer;^c and will serve to explain my meaning still further.

"The disciples of Wickliff are men of a serious, modest deportment; avoiding all ostentation in dress, mixing little with the busy world, and complaining of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves wholly by their own labour, and utterly despise wealth; being fully content with bare necessities. They are chaste and temperate; are never seen in taverns, or amused by the trifling gaieties of life. Yet you find them always employed;—either learning or teaching. They are concise and devout in their prayers; blaming an unanimated prolixity. They never swear; speak little; and in their public preaching, they lay the chief

^b Fisher was born at Beverley in Yorkshire, in 1459. He was educated at Cambridge, and became Master, or President of Queen's College in that University. He was made bishop of Rochester in 1504. It was during the time of his Presidency that Erasmus came to study at Cambridge, and took up his residence at Queen's College. This prelate was beheaded, by Henry VIII. in 1535, for denying the king's supremacy, and for speaking with freedom in behalf of the queen. The pope was so pleased with his conduct, that, even while Fisher was confined in the tower and attainted of high treason, he made him a cardinal, and sent him the proper hat belonging to that dignity. Henry was so much provoked, that he would not permit the hat to be brought into the kingdom: he also sent Cromwell to sound bishop Fisher, whether he intended to accept it. "Yes," said Fisher. The king then exclaimed with an oath,—"Well;—let the pope send him the hat when he pleases, he shall wear it on his shoulders, for I will leave him never a head to set it on." The tyrant was as good as his word. Erasmus speaks of Fisher in strong terms of commendation.

^c Mr. Fox tells us, he had this account from Brown's own daughter.

^d Luke xxlii. 34.

^e Reinher. quoted by GSpin.

stress on charity."—This passage is not produced as a proof of the candour of a Roman catholic, but of his wretched standard of virtue and holiness. For these excellencies of character in the followers of Wickliff are not here mentioned by the author in terms of approbation, but, on the contrary, are with great simplicity noted by him, as the distinguishing marks of a heretical people. So little, in the times of Wickliff and his followers, had the prevailing religion to do with morals and with the heart.

Though this and many other similar testimonies, which might be adduced, from popish authors, in proof of the innocence and virtues of the heretics, may satisfy us, that by no means all the persecutors of the godly, were deceivers and hypocrites in the gross sense of those terms, yet we must remember,—as indeed has already been intimated,—that the distinctions we would establish, still only serve to show that the sufferings of the righteous, during the period we are reviewing, are, probably, to be ascribed to very different degrees of guilt and wickedness in the hearts of those, who inflicted those sufferings. Far be it from us to pretend to exculpate, in the smallest degree, the perpetrators of any of the various and horrid crimes related in this chapter. Rather let St. Peter's example direct our judgments. That apostle thought it right to suggest to the Jews, that their case would have been worse, if, what they did, had not been done in ignorance, yet, he in nowise excuses them: he tells them plainly, that they had denied the Holy One, and killed the Prince of life, and had preferred a murderer to him; and in the preceding chapter, he directly accuses them of having taken Jesus of Nazareth; and, by wicked hands, crucified and slain him.

Our Saviour's remarkable prediction^a naturally occurs on this occasion. For, even on the supposition that it ought to be taken literally, and not extended to all succeeding ages of the Church, it most decidedly proves, that persons may be persecutors "unto a loon," without being gross hypocrites.—"The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service." And here it deserves to be noted that, though it is said these murderers would think they were doing God service, in killing his faithful servants, yet not one word is added in extenuation of their crimes.—For ought we know, therefore, such men might be in a state of judicial hardness and impenitence of heart, on account of long continued habits of sin, and long opposition to light and truth. After all the candid concessions and reasonable conjectures that can be made, respecting the measures of the wickedness of the various

papal persecutions, it must be owned, both that the subject is delicate, and also that we have not much to do with it. When we are wearied and astonished with the contemplation of the barbarous, and bloody scenes of this century, one of the most profitable, and most certain conclusions we can arrive at, is,—that the human "heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

CHAPTER II.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE, INCLUDING THE CASES OF JOHN HUSS, AND JEROM OF PRAGUE.

THIS celebrated council did not make any essential reformation in religion: On the contrary, they persecuted men who truly feared God; and they tolerated all the predominant corruptions. Their labours, therefore, do not deserve to be recorded, on account of the piety and virtue of those who composed the council. Yet the transactions at Constance claim considerable attention in these memoirs. They tend to throw light on the state of religion at that time: They also serve to illustrate the character of John Huss and of Jerom; and they afford various instructive reflections to those, who love to attend to the dispensations of Divine Providence, and would understand the comparative power of nature and of grace, of mere human resources, and of the operations of the Holy Spirit.

The council met in the year 1414. Its objects were various and of high importance.^a The necessity of the times had called aloud for an assembly of this kind. Ecclesiastical corruptions had increased to an intolerable magnitude; and Christendom had been distracted, nearly forty years, by a schism in the popedom. To settle this dispute, and restore peace to the church was the most urgent concern of the council. Three pretenders to the chair of St. Peter, severally, laid claim to infallibility. The very nature of their struggle was subversive of the authority to which each of them made pretensions;—and "of their vain contest there seemed no end." The princes, statesmen, and rulers of the church in those times, wanted not discernment to see the danger to which the whole ecclesiastical system was exposed by these contentions; but it seems never to have come into the minds of them or of any of the members of the council, to examine the foundation on which the popedom itself was erected. THAT, on all sides, was looked on as sacred and inviolable, though

^a Lentini's history of the council of Constance.

It is foreign to my design to follow this author through the details of his very accurate and circumstantial narration. The affairs, however, of John Huss and of Jerom deserve a minute attention.

allowed to be burdened and encumbered with innumerable abuses.

However, they deposed the three existing popes, and chose a fresh successor of St. Peter, Martin V.; and we are to remark a providential benefit, which arose from the accomplishment of this first object of the council; namely, that while they had their eye only on the restoration of the unity of the Roman See, they were led to decree the superiority of councils over popes. Thus a deep wound was given to the tyrannical hierarchy, which proved of considerable service to those real reformers, who arose about a hundred years after the council of Constance.

I say real reformers;—for, I cannot give this venerable name to the members of that assembly. That there needed a reformation of the church in all its component parts, and that church-discipline ought to be re-established,—these were ideas, indeed, which lay within their competence; and the members of this council universally confessed, that reformation and discipline ought to be prosecuted with vigour. But they brought not to the council the materials, which alone could qualify them for such a work. In general, the best individuals among them were merely moralists; had some “zeal for God, but not according to knowledge;” and knew no higher principles than the voice of natural conscience, the dictates of common sense, and some information concerning the preceptive part of christianity. Their system of religion was letter, not spirit;—law, not gospel. They had some degree of insight into the distemper of human nature, little or none into the remedy. To promote the recovery of depraved mankind, they knew no methods but those of moral suasion, upon principles merely natural. The original depravity of men, salvation through the atonement of a Redeemer, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, were doctrines, the use and efficacy of which they did not understand; yet, these are the only effectual instruments for the reformation either of a corrupted church, or of a corrupted individual, though they are, by the world, generally suspected to be productive of enthusiasm, and are also too often professed by men of counterfeit religion.

A hundred years after the council of Constance, a reformation was attempted and carried on, with permanent success, by men furnished with truly evangelical views and materials. But the members of this celebrated council undertook to make “bricks without straw;” and their projects of reform served only, in the event, to teach posterity, that the real doctrines of the gospel ought to be distinctly known, cordially relished, and powerfully experienced, by those who undertake to enlighten mankind; and that without this apparatus, the efforts of the wisest and most

dignified personages in Europe,—for such were those assembled at Constance,—will evaporate in the smoke of fair words and speeches, and of promising, but inefficient and unsubstantial schemes.

A moment's attentive consideration may convince us that this must unavoidably be the case. How could it be expected, in the instance before us, that popes and cardinals, bishops and clergy, would enact, and what is still more, would execute, laws, which bore hard on their own pride, their sloth, and their love of gain? Or, that the laity, noble or vulgar, would submit to strict rules of church-discipline? Nothing but the principle of divine love in the heart could effect these things; and divine love is learnt only in the school of Christ, and under the fostering influence of scripture-doctrine, connected with spiritual discernment. I need not put the reader in mind how ignorant in general, in regard to these things, men were in the fifteenth century. And hence, we are no more to wonder at the failure of the attempts of the council of Constance, than at the inefficacy of the complaints, made from age to age, of the wickedness of men, both by philosophers of old and by nominal christians in our own times, while those, who complain and even endeavour to effect reforms, are destitute of real christian perceptions, and regard no other light than that of mere nature. Thus the institution of mere laws, however good, “can never give life;” “the motions of sin by the law work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” If even the best characters, among the prodigious congregation at Constance, thus failed, through ignorance of the true method of relieving human evils, we need not be surprised, that those who were actuated by bad motives, should contribute nothing towards a real reformation. The consequence was, that the prevailing abuses remained in the church in full force. The council managed to restore unity to the popedom, which was indeed a very difficult point; but they found it more easy to procure consent to the deposition of wicked popes, than to compel the clergy to divest themselves of that avarice, ambition, and sensuality, which were the grand sources of the existing ecclesiastical disorders. However, THAT which men attempted in vain by methods merely human, God himself, about a century afterwards, effected, by the foolishness of preaching,* and by his own Spirit of grace.

It was proposed, that the bishops and other pastors should be compelled to reside in their cathedrals and parishes, to visit their flocks; to renounce pluralities, and to preach the word of God themselves, instead of committing that charge to ignorant or profane

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.
1 Lestant.

J Gal. iii.
= 1 Cor. i.

Rom. vii.

priests.—Amendments truly just and laudable! But those, who proposed these excellent things, were themselves in a high degree proper objects of censure. Some of the orators of the council declared that, "they strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel." In fact, several little punctilios were reformed; but, as we have just observed, all the substantial evils remained in the church.

There can be no doubt but they ought to have begun with christian doctrine itself, and its influence on the heart, if they had expected success.

The knights of the Teutonic order, at this time ranged through all their own neighbourhood with fire and sword, under the pretence of converting infidels, and had been justly complained of by the king of Poland; yet this council supported them in their enormities; nor would they even condemn a libel written by a monk, who had exhorted all christians to murder that monarch and to massacre the Poles. John Petit, a friar, had publicly vindicated the assassination, committed by the duke of Burgundy's order on the duke of Orleans, brother to the king of France. It may seem incredible, but it is true, that the king of France, who prosecuted this friar before the council of Constance, could not procure his condemnation. All the dignified orders in Europe, there assembled together; had not sufficient spirit and integrity to punish crimes of the most atrocious nature. Yet they could burn without mercy those whom they deemed heretics, though men of real godliness.—This part of the conduct of the assembly particularly deserves our attention; and still more so, if we keep constantly in mind who the members were that composed it. Italy, France, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, England, Denmark, Sweden, were represented by deputies: Four electors were present, namely, those of Mentz, and Saxony, the elector Palatine, and the burgrave of Nuremberg, who there received the electoral cap, besides envoys from the other electors: The emperor Sigismund was never absent, unless employed in the express business of the council: Many other German princes were present, besides the clergy, among whom were twenty archbishops, nearly one hundred and fifty bishops, about one hundred and fifty other dignitaries, and more than two hundred doctors.

After this general review, it may now be proper to lay before the reader a connected view of the proceedings of this council, chiefly in regard to those subjects which relate to the concerns of the real church of Christ.

At the opening of the council of Constance, pope John XXIII. and the emperor Sigismund, were at the head of it; and they continually endeavoured to baffle the views

of each other. The former was by far the most powerful of the three popes, who at that time struggled for the chair of St. Peter: but his character was infamous in the extreme; and Sigismund, while he pretended to acknowledge the authority of John, had formed a secret resolution to oblige him to renounce the pontificate. This same Sigismund was remarkable for hypocrisy and dissimulation: political artifices, however, were multiplied by both these potentates, and by many others connected with the council.—But what has the church of Christ to do with the intrigues of politicians?—These were the men who undertook to punish heretics and to reform the church."

John XXIII. secretly designed to leave the council as soon as possible; particularly if their pulse did not beat in his favour. His conscience suggested to him, that an inquiry into his own conduct would terminate in his disgrace; and the very situation of Constance, an imperial city, in the circle of Sussia, exposed him too much to the machinations of the emperor. As he had, however, in a council at Rome, already condemned the opinions of John Huss, he was determined to confirm that judgment at Constance, and in that way to signalize his zeal for what was then called the church.

John Huss had been summoned to the council to answer for himself, though already excommunicated at Rome. He obtained, however, a safe conduct^a from the emperor, who, in conjunction with his brother Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, had committed him to the care of several Bohemian lords, particularly of John de Chlum. These travelled with him to Constance, where they arrived six days after the pope.

John Huss was born in Bohemia in 1373. He was of mean parentage, but was raised to eminence by his superior genius and industry. All the authors of that time acknowledge, that he was a man of capacity and eloquence, and highly esteemed for the probity and decency of his manners. This is the testimony of the famous Æneas Sylvius, afterwards pope of Rome. But the letters of Huss written from Constance, which he specially requested might never be published, afford a still more striking attestation to his character. He was appointed rector of the university of Prague, which was then in a very flourishing state. His character was no less eminent in the church than in the academy. He was nominated preacher of Bethlehem in the year 1400; and was in the same year made confessor to Sophia of Bavaria, the wife of Wenceslaus king of Bohemia, a princess who highly esteemed John Huss, and was a personage of great merit: how far

^a A safe conduct here means an engagement in writing that he should be allowed to pass without molestation.

he was affected by the doctrine which he preached, it is not easy to ascertain; but here is no doubt that, after his condemnation, she was obliged, by the order of the emperor Sigismund, to retire to Presburg.

In 1405 Huss preached in the chapel of Bethlehem with great celebrity. Some of Wickliff's works had been brought into Bohemia by a Bohemian gentleman, named Faulfisch, when he returned from Oxford. Hence, and probably by other modes of conveyance, the evangelical views of the English reformer were introduced into that country. It is not easy to determine the point of time, when John Huss received a favourable impression of the works of Wickliff. At first he is said to have held them in detestation. The effect of prejudice indeed on a serious mind, against a person who has been condemned for heresy was not easily to be overcome; and it is not impossible, but that Luther's account of his own first reception of the works of Huss might resemble the celebrated Bohemian's reception of the works of Wickliff. "When I studied at Erford," says that truly great man, "I found in the library of the convent, a book entitled, 'The Sermons of John Huss.' I was anxious to know the doctrines of that arch-heretic. My astonishment in the reading of them was incredible. What, thought I, could move the council to burn so great a man, so able and judicious an expositor of scripture! But then the name of Huss was held in abomination: if I mentioned him with honour, I imagined the sky would fall, and the sun be darkened; I therefore shut the book with indignation. But I comforted myself with the thought, that perhaps he had written this before he fell into heresy!"—Such were the juvenile reflections of that renowned reformer.

But it is not in the power of prejudice to prevent the progress of the divine counsels, and the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. Notwithstanding the opposition of prejudice, habit, and natural corruptions, Huss was gradually convinced of the power and excellency of evangelical doctrine. It was not necessary that he should see all things in the same light as other reformers; but there are certain truths, in which all, who are taught of God, in every age, do and must agree; and certain points of experience also in religion, in which it is even impossible for them to differ. The doctrinal knowledge of the Bohemian reformer was indeed always very limited and defective; but the little fundamental light which, through grace, he attained, was directed to the best practical purposes. He preached loudly against the abuses of the Romish church; and particularly against the impostures of false miracles, which then abounded. And about the same year 1405 he also preached in a synod at

Prague, in the archbishop's presence, with amazing freedom against the vices of the clergy.

It was impossible, that a man who rendered himself so obnoxious to the hierarchy, should escape the aspersions of calumny: accordingly we find that, in the latter part of the year 1408, and the beginning of 1409, a clamour was raised against him on the following occasion.* Gregory XII. one of the three popes, whose schism gave rise to the council of Constance, was received by Bohemia. But when measures were proposed for calling a general council to compose the schism, Huss engaged the university to support those measures, and exhorted all Bohemia to the same purpose. The archbishop of Prague, who was attached to Gregory, opposed Huss, called him a schismatic, and forbade him to exercise the pastoral functions in his diocese. About the same time, on occasion of a dispute between the natives and the foreigners who belonged to the university, Huss having supported the former, and gained his point, the Germans in disgust retired from Prague. This circumstance enabled the Bohemian teacher to speak more publicly according to the views of Wickliff. The archbishop of Prague committed the books of the latter to the flames in 1410. But the progress of his opinions was rather accelerated than retarded by this step.

The troubles of John Huss were now multiplied. He was excommunicated at Rome. He had sent his proctors thither to answer for him; but they were committed to prison,⁹ after having remained there to no purpose a year and a half. Huss, after his excommunication, had no other remedy, but to appeal to Almighty God in very solemn terms. In his appeal,—which was charged on him as a crime,—among many other things, he says, "Almighty God, the one only essence in three persons, is the first and last refuge of those who are oppressed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, very God and very man, being desirous to redeem, from eternal damnation, his children, elected before the foundation of the world, has given, by suffering a bloody and ignominious death, this excellent example to his disciples,—to commit their cause to the judgment of God." He continued still to preach on subjects, which he deemed seasonable and useful. In one sermon he treated of the uses of the commemoration of the saints, among which, he reckons meditation on the misery of man, subject to death for sin; and on the death which Jesus Christ suffered for our sin. In this same sermon, while he zealously opposes the abuses of the times, he discovers that he himself was not yet entirely clear of the po-

ish notion of purgatory. "In praying devoutly for the dead," says he, "we procure relief to the saints in purgatory." It is sufficiently plain, however, that he could not lay much stress on the prayers of the living for the dead; for he also says expressly, "that there is no mention of such a practice in the holy scriptures: and, that neither the prophets nor Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, nor the saints that followed close after, taught prayer for the dead." "I verily believe," continues Huss, "this custom was introduced by the avarice of priests, who don't trouble themselves to exhort the people to live well, as did the prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles; but take great care to exhort them to make rich offerings in hopes of happiness and a speedy delivery from purgatory."

At length John Huss was forbidden to preach at Prague any more. All that he could then do was to instruct his countrymen by writings. Being summoned, as we have seen, to Constance, he obeyed; and before his departure, offered to give an account of his faith in the presence of a provincial synod at Prague, but was not able to obtain an audience. In this and some other particulars he appears to have acted with great frankness and sincerity; and, though his mind strongly foreboded that which happened in the issue, his resolution to appear at the general council was constant and unmoved. By a letter,¹ which he wrote to a friend, immediately before he left Prague, he intreats him, on the outside of it, not to open the letter, till he should have had certain news of his death. And among other things, he says, "You know,—woe is me!—before my priesthood I freely and frequently played at chess, neglected my time, and often unhappily provoked others and myself into blamable heat of temper by that game." About the same time he wrote a letter to his flock in terms which shewed how much their spiritual advantage lay at his heart. He exhorted them to steadfastness in the doctrine which he had taught them; prayed for grace that he himself might persevere, and not betray the gospel by cowardice; and he begged them also to pray, that he might either glorify God by martyrdom; or return to Prague with an unblemished conscience, and with more vigour than ever to extirpate the doctrine of antichrist. He expressed himself to be very uncertain of the event, but spake like one resigned to the divine will, and joyful to die for the cause of Christ. In the course of his journey to Constance he acted the same open part, and every where declared his readiness to be heard by all mankind.—Such was the character and conduct of Huss,—who, as we have seen, arrived at

Constance six days after the pontiff John XXIII.

On the succeeding day, he gave notice of his arrival to the pope through his friend John de Chlum, who at the same time implored for him the protection of his holiness. This pope himself was then in much fear on his own account, and it behoved him not, in his present circumstances to exercise the fulness of papal domination. He therefore answered courteously; declared that he would use all his power to prevent any injustice being done to him while at Constance; and he took off his excommunication.

John Huss appears to have expected that he should have been allowed to preach before the council; for he had prepared sermons for that purpose, which are inserted among his works.

In the first of these he professed his christian creed. He declares his reliance on the word of God, which, he observes, is the true rule, and sufficient for salvation. He declares his veneration also for fathers and councils, so far as they are conformable to scripture. "Faith," he adds, "is the foundation of all virtues. Every man must be a disciple either of God or of Satan. Faith is the rudiment of one of these schools, infidelity of the other.—A man must believe in God alone, not in the virgin, not in the saints, not in the church, not in the pope; for none of these are God." He distinguishes faith into three kinds. 1. To receive a position, but with some doubt, he apprehends to be the faith which we give to mere men, who yet are fallible. 2. To adhere without any doubt to the sentiments of holy doctors:—still this is only to treat their sentiments as opinions, not as articles of faith. 3. To believe simply and purely is the faith due to the scriptures. This is the faith which, he apprehends, involves in it all acts of obedience and love; the faith which no wicked man possesses: "the wicked man is a christian," says he, "in NAME only, and cannot rehearse the creed without making himself a liar. The church," he says, "is an assembly of all the predestinated; and consists, he thinks, of the triumphant church in heaven, the militant church on earth, and the sleeping church,—pitiable blindness!—who are now suffering in purgatory." He allows the intercession of the Virgin Mary and of other saints; and, in favour of this popish tenet, he speaks far more forcibly, than might have been expected from one, who had so unqualified a veneration for the Holy Scriptures.

If Huss had been allowed to preach this, and his other sermon which treats of peace and unity, the injustice of his condemnation must have appeared evident to all mankind,

and the council would have been covered with disgrace and ignominy. For there was something very peculiar in his case; he may justly be said to have been a martyr for holy practice itself. He does not seem to have held any one doctrine which at that day was called heretical. The superstitious notions of the times were, in general, parts of his creed: and as far as a judgment can now be formed, he was not possessed of more light than was absolutely necessary to constitute the character of a genuine christian. On this account the wickedness of his enemies was more palpably evident. The world hated him, because he was not of the world, and because he testified of it, that its works were evil. In what then did the peculiarities of his doctrine consist? The little specimen, which has been given of his creed explains this matter. He held the faith of God's elect,—a divine faith necessarily productive of love and obedience, distinct in its whole kind from the mere human faith of wicked men. With them faith has nothing in its nature that draws a man to God in confidence and affection; with them, the term, "vicious believer," appears not to be a solecism in language; and indeed, it may generally be observed, that godly men in all ages, even those men, whose evangelical knowledge, like that of Huss, is extremely imperfect, always distinguish between a dead and a living faith; and that their views of this distinction are the consequences of the work of the Holy Spirit on their own hearts. They have known in common with the rest of mankind what a formal assent to christianity means; they have known also, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, what a lively faith means: The former is merely human, has a dead uniformity, or an unanimated sameness: The latter has life and power; is productive of spiritual exercises and actions; is capable of great varieties, augmentations, declensions, and intervals; and is felt to be not of man, but of God. It is the distinctive mark of a child of God, THAT HE IS IN POSSESSION OF THIS LIVELY FAITH; and this, no doubt, was the spark of Divine Fire, which inflamed the heart of the Bohemian martyr; and which was there preserved alive amidst the contagion of superstition, the temptations of the world, and the menaces of insolent and tyrannical domination.²

Those who look only at the surface of religion, might be tempted to think, that the council in general was influenced by the Spirit of God. In all their public sessions they sang an anthem, and then they prayed kneeling.³ After having remained some

time in this posture, a deacon called out to them to rise; and the president, addressed himself to the Holy Ghost in a loud voice in a collect, which, in very solemn and explicit terms, supplicated his effectual influence,—that notwithstanding the enormity of their sins, which filled them with dread, he would deign to descend into their hearts, to direct them, to dictate their decrees, and to execute them himself, and also to preserve their minds from corrupt passions, and not suffer them, through ignorance or selfishness, to swerve from justice and truth. The ideas, and perhaps the very words, of the prayer were taken from better times, when the operations of the Holy Ghost were not only professed, but FELT in christian assemblies.—The formalities of true religion often remain a long time, after the spirit of it has been almost extinguished. It is not easy to say how much wickedness may be united with religious formalities. The rulers and great men of the Jewish nation, in the time of Christ, were remarkable examples of the hypocrisy here alluded to; and those, who are acquainted with the history of their flagitious conduct, will not be surprised to hear of similar instances.—Both the emperor Sigismund and his consort Barba attended the religious ceremonies of this council, and both were infamous for lewdness.⁴

Sigismund in a deacon's habit read the gospel, while the pope celebrated mass!

Huss was soon deprived of his liberty in the following manner. He was accused by Palets, professor of divinity at Prague, and by Causis, a pastor of one of the parishes of the same city. These men caused bills to be posted up against him in Constance, as an excommunicated heretic. When Huss complained, the pope replied, "what can I do in the case? your own countrymen have done it." The bishops of Augsburg and of Trent were directed to summon him to appear before John XXIII. "I had expected," said Huss, "to give an account of myself before the general council, and not before the pope and his cardinals; however, I am willing to lay down my life, rather than to betray the truth." He set out therefore without delay, accompanied by his generous friend John de Chlum. On his arrival at the pope's palace he was committed to prison. Chlum made loud complaints to the pope, but in vain. Eight articles were exhibited against Huss by Causis, and the pope appointed commissioners to try him. The vexations and insults, to which he was exposed, were endless: And there was this peculiar injustice practised against him,—that he was accused of being more inimical

¹ I have here described what the faith of the gospel implies and produces, rather than in what it specifically consists. This has been done on former occasions, and may be done again in the course of this history, when we are reviewing characters who understood evangelical truth much better than Huss did.

² Lenfant, p. 50.

³ Aeneas Sylvius, Hist.

⁴ Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. John, xlviii. 35.

to the doctrines of the church of Rome, than he really was. Whatever Wickliff maintained, Huss was accused of maintaining: Nor were his own express declarations respected, particularly in regard to transubstantiation,—a doctrine, which he certainly believed, and on which he wrote his thoughts while under confinement at Constance. Such however was the strength of mind with which he was endowed, that during the same period, he wrote also several tracts on subjects of practical godliness, which were sent to Prague by friends whom he had at Constance. With great clearness he vindicated himself against the charge of heresy; but, his holy life was unpardonable in the eyes of his enemies: moreover, all those, whom the faithfulness of his pastoral services in Bohemia had provoked, now found an opportunity to wreak their vengeance upon him.

The generous count de Chlum, grieved and incensed at the imprisonment of Huss, wrote to Sigismund on this subject. That prince immediately sent express orders to his ambassadors to cause him to be set at liberty, and even to break the gates of the prison in case of resistance. We naturally expect to hear, in the next place, of the prisoner's enlargement; for, independently of this application of count de Chlum, the honour of Sigismund himself, who had positively promised a safe conduct to Huss, seemed to require it. But notwithstanding all this, the unfortunate Bohemian teacher was not released! The crooked arts and intrigues both of the pope and of the emperor, were too powerful for the sincerity and open dealings of Huss: and he soon found, that to commit himself to him that judgeth righteously, was his only expedient. In the mean time, the doctors, in their preachings, exclaimed most pathetically against the prevailing evils and abuses, and exhorted the council to reform the church with vigour. Its growing corruptions and enormities were, by them, exposed in the strongest colours. Wickliff himself, or Huss, could scarcely have spoken in a more pointed or in a severer manner.—But these INNOVATORS, we find, were not permitted, to censure with impunity, even the most shameful practices. The explanation is,—THEIR attachment to the See of Rome itself was doubted; whereas the divines just mentioned, preached by order of their superiors, and constantly took particular care, in the midst of their keenest animadversions, to express an unequivocal respect to the popedom in general.

In the beginning of the year 1415, the commissioners for examining Huss, found themselves impeded by the emperor's grant of a safe conduct; and they scrupled not, at once to intreat that prince to violate his most solemn engagement. To be brief;

Sigismund was at length persuaded, that his conscience ought not to be burdened in this matter; but that he was excused from keeping faith with a man, accused of heresy; and that to acquiesce in the desires of the venerable council, was the proper line of conduct for an obedient and "good son of the church."¹ Such was the language of the Romanists. A direct breach of faith is, however, so strong a violation of the law WRITTEN IN THE HEART of man, that it was not easy even for the most able defender of a bad cause, to vindicate actions of this kind. Labourd apologies have been published to soften the transactions before us.² But to what purpose is it to multiply words, in order to misrepresent a plain fact, which may be told in a very few lines? The authority of Sigismund extended over the empire; HE, by virtue of that authority, REQUIRED ALL HIS SUBJECTS, TO SUFFER HUSS TO PASS AND REPASS SECURE; AND, FOR THE HONOUR OF HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY, IF NEED BE, TO PROVIDE HIM WITH GOOD PASSPORTS.³ Constance was an imperial city: From this city he was NOT ALLOWED to repass, but was detained in prison, till he was unjustly burnt by the order of the council. Was this for the honour of his imperial majesty?

The perfidious character of Sigismund indeed was well known. It appears from one of the letters of John Huss, that, before his departure, he had been told by some persons, that the emperor would betray him. But, this servant of God, in honour of his master, ventured every thing for the cause of divine truth.

Before the death of their countryman, the Bohemian nobility, enraged at the perfidy of Sigismund, repeatedly remonstrated, by letters, against his proceedings:—but all to no purpose. At the solicitation of Palet, Huss was confined in the dominican convent, where he became dangerously sick, through the bad air and other inconveniencies of a noisome dungeon.

But suffering is not the PECULIAR lot of godly men: wickedness has, also, its hardships and its inconveniencies. That same John XXIII, who had most unrighteously persecuted Huss, gradually found himself in so disagreeable a situation in Constance, partly from the accusations of his enemies,—to the justice of which his own conscience could not but assent,—and partly from the intrigues and manœuvres of Sigismund and the majority of the council, that he determined to depart, in secret, from the assembly. Four nations were represented at Constance, namely, the Italians, the Germans, the French, and the English. The last of these

¹ Nausclerus.

² Maimburg's Hist. of the western schism, Part II. Varillas Hist. of Wickliff, Part I.

³ Lefant, p. 61.

had proposed even to arrest the pope; and, though this proposal did not take effect, there seemed a general agreement in the four nations to oblige him to resign his authority. The other two anti-popes, Benedict XIII, who was chiefly owned in Spain; and Gregory XII who had some partisans in Italy, were also pressed to resign; but, like John XXIII they were determined to preserve the shadow of power as long as possible. The three popes seemed to vie with one another in equivocation, artifice and disingenuity. — However, Benedict and Gregory were not present at Constance, but sent thither their respective legates, during the sessions. At this moment, when the council seemed not a little embarrassed what course they should take, William Fillastre, a cardinal and a French divine, composed a memorial, which was highly acceptable both to the emperor and to the nations. He even advanced a sentiment, which, at last, very much prevailed in the assembly, and was actually reduced to practice; namely, that a “general council was authorised to depose even a lawful pope.” This, as we have already observed, was the most beneficial effect of the council of Constance. The wisdom of divine providence weakened the strength of antichrist by the measures of a council, which, in the main, was destitute both of piety and of probity!

It is a remarkable instance of the love of power, in men who have been habituated to it, that John XXIII, even in the decline of his authority, was glad to signalize the relics of his pontificate by the canonization of Bridget, a Swedish woman, which took place in this same year 1415.

After numberless intrigues, in which the pope and the emperor seemed to strive which should exceed the other in dissimulation, the former fled from the council to Schaffhausen;—whence he wrote to the emperor a letter couched in the most respectful terms.—Schaffhausen, it should be observed, was a city belonging to Frederic, duke of Austria, who had promised to defend pope John.

By this step, the designs of those, who really intended to put an end to the schism, seemed to be quashed entirely. Among these was the emperor himself, in whose conduct, scandalous and hypocritical as it was in the extreme, one object is yet plainly discernible,—a sincere desire of restoring the unity of the hierarchy. He assured the council, on the day after the departure of pope John, that he would defend their authority to the last drop of his blood. He observed, that there were many antichrists in the world, who sought their own interest, not that of Jesus Christ: He inveighed against the conduct of John; he exposed his tyranny, si-

mony, chicanery, and insincerity; and exhorted them to judge him according to his deserts. Thus, while the members of this assembly agreed in persecuting the church of God, and still detained in prison the excellent John Huss, they were involved in extreme difficulties, and scarcely knew how to support the system of idolatry, and secular formality of religion, to which they were in general attached. The doctrine of the superiority of a council, started by Fillastre, was, however, maintained and pressed at this time in an elaborate discourse of John Gerson, chancellor of the university of Paris, who was looked upon as the soul of the assembly, and who, in fact, was one of the greatest men of that age in erudition and knowledge. He admits the pope to be Christ's vicar on earth; but asserts that his power is limited, and ought to be restrained by certain rules and laws for the edification of the church, to which the authority of the pope and all other persons ought to be devoted. Gerson seems to have disregarded the authority of scripture, which knows nothing of such a vicar of Christ: Common sense, however, and the experience of the necessity of some restrictions of the papal power appear to have suggested to this great man several salutary arguments and propositions; nor is this the only instance in which we may see, that even mere natural principles, without the aid of revelation, can proceed to a CERTAIN LENGTH in correcting the enormous abuses of a corrupt church.

While the imperial and papal parties were thus contending, the commissioners endeavoured to oblige John Huss to retract,—but in vain. Though infirm, and harassed, during his confinement in prison, with a variety of vexations, he answered to every particular inquiry and objection; at the same time, always desiring to be heard by the council itself. The pope's officers hitherto guarded him; but these being gone to their master, he was delivered to the bishop of Constance; and was afterwards carried to the fortress of Gottleben. In his letters to his friends, he commends the pope's officers for their gentle treatment, and expresses his fears of worse usage in his new circumstances.

It was one of those remarkable instances of the conduct of divine providence, with which the history of the council of Constance abounds, that John XXIII himself, the unrighteous persecutor of Huss, was soon after brought as a prisoner to the same castle of Gottleben, and lodged in the same place with the victim of his cruelty. For Sigismund, determined to support the authority of the council, took such measures as effectually quashed the power of Frederic, duke of Austria, reduced him to surrender at discretion, and obliged him to abandon the cause of the pope. Whence this pontiff:

who at first had presided at the council, after having been driven to the necessity of fleeing from place to place, was at length confined at Gottleben, which was within half a league from Constance. Seldom has there been a case, which more remarkably showed that, in external things, the same events often attend the righteous and the wicked. The real difference of condition between the pope and the martyr was INTERNAL, and ought to be measured by the different frame of their MINDS. The one was harassed with all the pangs of disappointed ambition; and had neither the knowledge nor the disposition to console himself with the DIVINE PROMISES; the latter, "in patience possessed his spirit, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God."

John XXIII. was, at length, solemnly deposed, and was also rendered incapable of being re-elected. The same sentence was issued against Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII. The conduct of these three men, particularly of the first, had been so infamous, that all the world applauded these determinations of the council.—In general the members of this assembly were influenced by superstitious, selfish, worldly motives; but this decision is among the very few important instances in which they merit commendation.

While the Bohemian reformer, contrary to every principle of justice, honour, and humanity, was still detained in confinement, and still in vain solicited a fair hearing of his cause, there was exhibited at this council another striking example of the same spirit of persecution.

Jerom of Prague arrived at Constance. He was a master of arts; but had neither the clerical nor the monastic character. He is universally allowed to have been a man of very superior talents. He had adhered to John Huss; and very vigorously seconded all his endeavours to promote a reformation in Bohemia. He had travelled into England for the sake of his studies; and had thence brought the books of Wickliff into his own country.* When Huss was setting out from Prague, Jerom had exhorted him to maintain with steadfastness the doctrines which he had preached; and had promised that he would himself go to Constance to support him, if he should hear that he was oppressed. Huss, in one of his letters, expressly desired a friend to prevent Jerom's performance of this promise, lest he should meet with the same treatment as he himself had experienced. But Jerom had the generosity to disregard the entreaties of Huss, and came directly to Constance. Hearing, however, that Huss was not allowed a fair examination, and that some secret machina-

tion was carrying on against himself, he retired to Überlingen, whence he wrote to the emperor to request a safe conduct. Sigismund refused to grant his petition. Upon which Jerom published a paper, declaring it to be his desire to answer any charges of heresy that could possibly be brought against him. And for the purpose of executing so honest a purpose, he begged, in the name of God; to have a safe conduct granted to him. "If," says he, "I am put in prison, and violence is used against me before I am convicted, the council will manifest to the whole world their injustices by such a proceeding." The publication of this writing produced no satisfactory answer; and Jerom finding it impossible to be of any service to his friend Huss, he resolved to return to his own country. After his departure from Constance, he was summoned to appear before the council; and a SAFE CONDUCT OF PASSPORT was dispatched to him; which promised him, indeed, all manner of security, but it contained such a SALVO TO JUSTICE and the INTERESTS OF THE FAITH, as rendered it, in effect, a mere nullity: and as to the citation for his appearance, Jerom protested, on his first examination, that it had never reached his hands.

To omit a long detail of uninteresting particulars, this persecuted reformer was arrested at Hirsaw on his return to Bohemia; and led in chains to Constance.

He was immediately brought before a general congregation, which seems, on this occasion, to have assembled for the express purpose of insulting, ensnaring, and browbeating their virtuous prisoner. A bishop questioned him concerning his precipitate flight from Überlingen, and his non-obedience to the citation. "Because," answered Jerom, "I was not allowed a safe conduct: notwithstanding, however, if I had known of the citation, I would have returned instantly, though I had been actually on the confines of Bohemia." Upon this answer, there arose such a clamour in the assembly, that no one could be heard distinctly: every mouth opened, at once, against Jerom; and the impartial spectator saw rather the representation of the baiting of a wild beast, than of a wise assembly investigating truth, and dispensing justice.—When order was restored, Gerson who had formerly known Jerom in France, and who discovered much acrimony towards BOTH the Bohemian reformers, reproached him for having formerly given much offence to the university of Paris, by introducing several erroneous propositions. With great spirit Jerom answered, that it was hard to have opinions objected to him, of so long a date; and that, moreover, the disputations of young students were never to be considered as strict disquisitions of truth. "As I was admitted master of arts," said

* Cameron. Hist. Narr.

he, "I used the liberty of discussion, allowed to philosophers; nor was I then charged with any error: I am still ready to maintain what I advanced at that time, if I am allowed; and also to retract if I be convicted of mistake."

This was not the only instance in which Jerom had occasion to shew his promptitude in answering calumnies. He was repeatedly attacked in a similar style;—for a persecuted follower of Christ is looked on, by the world, as lawful game. The governors of the universities of Cologne and of Heidelberg made heavy complaints of the heresies which the prisoner had maintained in those places respectively. "You vented several errors in our university," said a doctor from Cologne. "Be pleased to name one," answered Jerom. The accuser was instantly stopped in his career, and pleaded that his memory failed him. "You advanced most impious heresies among us," said a divine from Heidelberg, "I remember one particularly concerning the Trinity. You declared that it resembled, water, snow, and ice." Jerom avowed, that he still persisted in his opinions, but was ready to retract with humility and with pleasure, when he should be convinced of an error. However, no opportunity was allowed either for explanation or defence: all was confusion and uproar: voices burst out from every quarter,—*"Away with him, Away with him;—To the fire;—To the fire."*

Jerom stood astonished at the gross indecency of this scene; and as soon as he could, in any degree, be heard, he looked round the assembly with a steady and most significant countenance, and cried aloud, "Since nothing but my blood will satisfy you, I am resigned to the will of God." With sufficient adroitness,—if the passage had but been quoted in support of a better cause,—the archbishop of Saltzbourg replied, "No, Jerom,—God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live."

After this tumultuous examination Jerom was delivered to the officers of the city, and immediately carried to a dungeon. Some hours afterward, Wallenrod, archbishop of Riga, caused him to be conveyed privately to St. Paul's church, where he was bound to a post, and his hands were chained to his neck. In this posture he remained ten days, and was fed with bread and water only. His friends, all this time, knew not what was become of him; till at length one of them received notice of his pitiable situation from the keeper of the prison, and procured him better nourishment. But notwithstanding this, the various hardships he had undergone, brought upon him a dangerous illness, in the course of which Jerom pressed the council to allow him a confessor. With difficulty he

at length obtained his request; and, through the means of his confessor, the poor heretic procured some small mitigation of his sufferings from bonds and other cruel treatment. But he remained in prison till his death.

A number of important, coincident, circumstances, tending to illustrate the state of religion in those times, have given vast celebrity to the council of Constance; otherwise, the reader must now be convinced, that the members who composed that immense assembly, merit the description which we have already given of their general character.—Many of them were learned and able; many of them superstitious and bigotted; and most of them worldly-minded and unprincipled, and totally ignorant of evangelical truth.

As the works of the famous Wickliff had undoubtedly laid the foundation of the religious innovations in Bohemia, they now proceeded to condemn the doctrines of that obnoxious reformer. In this point they harmonized with John XXIII., whom they had deposed and now held in custody. For this same pontiff, John XXIII., had formerly at the desire of Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, condemned the doctrines of Wickliff.^b These very doctrines, digested into forty-five articles, which had formally been pronounced heretical at Rome, were now read in the council; and as far as appears, they were reprobated without one dissenting voice, and the author of them was pronounced a heretic.

The decrees of so violent and so iniquitous a council as that of Constance, concerning articles of faith, are of little moment. The heads of the articles, however in the main and in substance, express the real sentiments of Wickliff, which have been already considered and reviewed. His opposition to the ROMISH doctrine of transubstantiation, was positive and unequivocal. In some particular points, his meaning seems to have been distorted, through prejudice or malice. In regard to his opinions concerning tithes and the temporal possessions of the clergy, let the reader, when he has compared the several arguments advanced by the parties, judge for himself, whether Wickliff or the council had the advantage in that controversy. After what has been stated in chapter the third, cent. 14, I shall make no further observations on the subject,—except that the council, on this head, do not appear to have misrepresented Wickliff's notions.

"Tithes," says Wickliff, "are not of divine right, because it cannot be proved from the gospel, that Jesus Christ either paid or ordered them to be paid." In his complaints to the king and parliament he desired, that

^b Wilkin's council, p. 360.

^c It has been before observed, that on this article of faith Wickliff approached nearly to consubstantiation.

tithes and offerings might be GIVEN, as before, to honest and able persons, not EXTORTED by force. He thinks it wrong, that the laity should be so much oppressed for the purpose of pampering the luxury of a priest, as not to be able to maintain their own families, and to relieve the poor. "As the laity only," says he, "paid tithes to be instructed in the word of God, there are many cases, in which according to the laws of God and man, the people may refuse to pay them. However, a GOOD priest ought to have a handsome maintenance: and the appropriation of parish-churches to rich monasteries is a great evil."

Even the council of Constance will deserve to be heard, when they appeal to scripture, and give reasons to support their decrees. "The right," say they, "which the clergy have to the possession of temporalities, is established by several arguments drawn from the Holy Scriptures. The clergy under the old law possessed forty-eight cities with their suburbs. They had tithes of all the Israelites, and the first-fruits of their corn, wine, oil, &c. as well as of all things consecrated to God. Besides, if according to St. Paul a bishop must be given to hospitality, and a deacon must rule his house, they must have houses and substance. It appears by the book of the Acts, that the believers had possessions; and among those believers were the clergy. Jesus Christ himself had money, of which Judas was the treasurer. God orders Jeremiah to buy a field, which belonged to a Levite, who is called in Scripture Hanameel. Augustine, in an epistle to a bishop, named Boniface, "observes, that what the clergy possess more than necessary, belongs to the poor. What other practical tendency can Wickliff's doctrine on this subject have, than to stir up the laity to seize the possessions of the clergy?"

Wickliff is accused also of saying, that all things happen from absolute necessity.—The council use the common Arminian arguments in opposition to the English reformer, whose sentiments, however, on this subject have never been shewn to be materially different from what by far the greater part of good christians have maintained in all ages.

If the council of Constance had studied to vindicate Wickliff's reasonings respecting the abuses of popery, and to cast an odium upon their own doctrines and proceedings, they could scarcely, it should seem, have effected their purpose by surer means, than by using certain arguments which they thought proper to bring forward in confutation of the opinions of the man whom they looked on as a most dangerous innovator.—Thus; on one occasion, they boldly affirm, "That there is no salvation out of the church of Rome." A proposition of this magnitude

one would have thought, required all the proof and illustration that could be given to it. Whereas the learned council content themselves with gravely appealing to a decree of the Lateran council, and to a decretal of pope Callixtus, which established the two following points; 1st, That the church of Rome is the mistress of all churches; and 2dly, That it is not lawful to depart from her decisions. "Hence, say they, it clearly follows, that the pope is the immediate vicegerent of Jesus Christ, because the church of Rome has so determined. Though this or that particular pope be corrupt, the church of Rome itself can never decay." Thus do these men give the palm of truth to the man whom they condemn as a heretic. For he appealed to the scriptures; THEY to the church of Rome;—on a subject too, in which that church is more particularly bound to adduce another sort of argument than that of her own authority.

In the same year commissioners were appointed to inquire into the disputes between the Teutonic knights and the Poles. And though nothing was decided at present in that business, it may throw some light on the state of Christendom, to give a general idea of the case. The Prussians, as we have seen, were among the last of the nations of Europe, who received the forms of Christianity. Barbarous and untractable in their manners, they invaded and harassed their neighbours the Poles, who called to their assistance the Teutonic knights, the remnants of those warlike crusaders, who so long had desolated the east. The knights, in consideration of the succours afforded to the Poles, received from them the grant of Prussia and of some neighbouring districts; which grant was confirmed by the Roman pontiff. In this manner Prussia at length was obliged to profess itself christian; nor do there seem to be in history any instances of national conversions, more contrary to the genius of the gospel, than this of the Prussians. The knights, armed with indulgences for the conversion of infidels, and with bulls for putting themselves in possession of conquered countries, gratified their military passion, while they imagined they were doing God service, and while they wasted all the neighbourhood with fire and sword, and assaulted even the Poles their benefactors. Several pitched battles were fought between them and the king of Poland, in which they were generally defeated. Their perfidy was equal to their ambition; for though truces were made from time to time, they continually violated them, as if they had been determined with all their might to disgrace the holy religion for which they professed so much zeal. Ladislaus, king of Poland, had views more honourable to the christian name. In a letter

which he wrote to a friend, he protested, that he could not refrain from tears before a battle, in which he foresaw the defeat of the knights, and that he entered into the engagement with much commiseration of his enemies.

The repeated violences of these fighting professors of christianity, obliged this prince, though victorious in the field, to send ambassadors to the council of Constance. The question of law for the decision of the assembly was, whether it is right for christians to convert infidels by force of arms, and to seize their estates: The knights maintained the affirmative, the Polish ambassadors the negative; and such was the state of religion at that time, that the authority of a council was deemed necessary to decide a case, which to us does not appear to involve the smallest difficulty.—When men are heated by ambition, or blinded by prejudice and self-interest, they often forget the dictates of common sense, and the first principles of morality.

In the same year 1415, another object of controversy was started in the council, which was afterwards attended with important consequences, and produced one of the usual subjects of contention between the papists and the protestants; I mean the doctrine of the communion in both kinds.⁴ John of Prague, bishop of Litomissel in Moravia, censured in the assembly the practice of the followers of Huss, who administered the wine to the laity. About 25 years before the council of Constance, Matthias, a curate of Prague, had ventured to preach publicly against the general disuse of the cup in the communion, and is said to have actually administered the sacrament to the laity in both kinds. It is not easy to say precisely, at what period the general disuse took place, but we have seen that it was gradually effected in the dark ages, long after the time of Gregory the first of Rome; and that it was, most probably, a concomitant of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Matthias was obliged to retract in a synod assembled at Prague in 1389. It is however agreeable to the general views of this history to observe, from a Bohemian writer,⁵ that Matthias was a pastor of great piety and probity, fervently zealous for the truth of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the Gospel, an enemy to the reigning corruptions and abuses, and one who suffered greatly for his assiduity in preaching the word of God. He died in 1394. Some months after the departure of John Huss for Constance, Jacobel, a pastor of Prague, a man renowned for learning and purity of manners, revived the doctrine of Matthias. Peter of Dresden, being expelled from Saxony for maintaining the Wal-

densian doctrines, retired to Prague and there instructed youth. From him Jacobel learnt that the withholding the cup from the laity was an error.⁶ The man was faithful to his convictions: he preached with perspicuity and with vehemence: he roused men's attention and excited their zeal; and by these means a flame was kindled throughout Bohemia respecting this matter. The clergy of that kingdom complained to the council of Constance; and the bishop of Litomissel, while he impeached Jacobel, represented the circumstance of this new controversy, as a consequence of the doctrine of John Huss, in order to hasten his condemnation.

That reformer had probably been inclined to the views of Jacobel before he left Prague; but it was not till after he came to Constance, that he published his approbation of the communion in both kinds. The principal author, or, to speak more properly, the principal reviver of this practical truth in the church of Christ, was Jacobel, who seems to have been a zealous, active, laborious, minister of Christ. Little indeed is known of his pastoral services, because here, as in other cases, we have to lament that the accounts of vital godliness are general and short, while those of the controversies in external affairs are verbose and prolix. Let the christian reader, however, contemplate with a lively satisfaction the providential effects of Waldensian light and knowledge in spiritual things.

The appearance of the new controversy, added to the question concerning Jerom of Prague, increased the fury of the storm against Huss; and his enemies laboured day and night for his destruction. His health and strength were decayed by the rigour of confinement. The great men of Bohemia, repeatedly insisted on justice being done to their countryman. But justice was a stranger at Constance: the emperor himself had perfidiously given up this faithful servant of God to the malice of his enemies; and the council, as if conscious of the difficulty of condemning him openly, had recourse to the despicable means of attempting, by repeated insults and vexations, to shake his constancy, and render a public trial unnecessary. He was frequently examined in private. An air of violence and of menace was employed on those occasions, of which we may form some idea from one of the letters of Huss; "Causia, says he, was there, holding a paper in his hand, and stirring up the bishop of Constantinople to oblige me to answer distinctly to each article it con-

⁴ It appears from Perrin's History of the Waldenses, p. 156, that this people rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation.—According to them, "the eating of the spiritual bread is the eating of Christ's body figuratively. Otherwise, Christ must have been eaten perpetually. For we need to feed on him continually in a spiritual sense. To eat him, is to abide in him."

⁵ Infant, p. 256.

⁶ Procopius of Prague.

tained. Every day he is brewing some mischief or other. God, for my sins, has permitted HIM AND PALETZ to rise up against me. Causis examines all my letters and words with the air of an inquisitor; and Palets has written down all the conversation which we have had together for many years.—I have this day suffered great vexation."

The approbation of a good conscience, and the comforting presence of the Spirit of God, appears to have supported this holy man in all his sufferings. He gave his adversaries no advantage over him either through warmth or timidity; he refused to give answers in private; he reserved himself to the public trial which he had always solicited; he retracted nothing of what he had openly preached, and he possessed his soul in patience and resignation.

The unrighteous views of the council being thus far baffled, he was conducted to Constance, lodged in the Franciscan monastery, and loaded with chains; in which condition he remained till the day of his condemnation.

His first hearing before the council was attended with so much confusion, through the intemperate rage of his enemies, that nothing could be concluded. In the second, in which the emperor was present, for the purpose of preserving order, Huss was accused of denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. Some Englishmen, who knew what Wickliff held on that point, and who were ready to take for granted, that Huss dissented in no article from their countryman, pressed him vehemently on the subject. It appeared however, that the Bohemian teacher followed the church of Rome on his important doctrine; and the sincerity of his creed, though a mistaken one, appears from his treatise on the body of Christ.

A tedious dispute ensued concerning the refusal of Huss to join with those, who condemned the errors of Wickliff. He explained himself with sufficient precision on this head: he declared, that he blamed the conduct of the archbishop Subinco at Prague, only because he had condemned Wickliff's books without examination, and without distinction; and he added, that most of the doctors of the university of Prague found fault with that prelate, because he produced no reasons from the scriptures. Huss further observed to the council, that, not having been able to obtain justice from John XXIII. he had appealed from him to Jesus Christ. His seriousness in mentioning this appeal exposed him to the derision of the council. It was even doubted whether it was lawful to appeal to Jesus Christ. Huss, however, with great gravity affirmed,—that it was always lawful to appeal from an inferior to a higher court,—that in this case the judge was

infallible, full of equity and compassion, and one who would not refuse justice to the miserable. The levity of the assembly, and the seriousness of the prisoner were remarkably contrasted in these proceedings.—The reader will of course understand John Huss in the sense in which, no doubt, he intended to be understood. In appealing to Jesus Christ, the conscientious martyr had his own mind fixed on the last judgment, and he aimed at making an impression on the court by directing their attention to that awful tribunal.

It would be tedious and uninteresting to take notice of the variety of calumnies with which he was assailed. One instance may deserve to be mentioned. "You one day, said his accusers, advised the people to take up arms against those, who opposed your doctrine." "I one day, replied Huss, while I was preaching on the christian armour, described in the sixth chapter to the Ephesians, exhorted my audience to take the sword of the spirit, and the helmet of salvation; but I expressly admonished them, that I meant the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and not a material sword." Sigismund exhorted him to retract his errors, and declared; that rather than support him in his heresy, he would with his own hands kindle the fire to burn him.

John de Chlum, however, was not to be dismayed by the power and multitude of the adversaries of Huss: He supported the insulted victim of their fury with courage and constancy. In his third hearing, John Huss, answered the inquiries made to him concerning articles of supposed heresy, which were extracted from his own works. He answered severally to the questions with much clearness and candour, owning, denying, or explaining, as occasions required. He was vehemently pressed to retract his errors, to own the justice of the accusations, and to submit to the decrees of the council. But neither promises nor menaces moved him. "To abjure, said he, is to renounce an error that hath been held. But as in many of those articles, errors are laid to my charge which I never thought of, how can I renounce them by oath? As to those articles, which I own to be mine, I will renounce them with all my heart, if any man will teach me sounder doctrines than what I have advanced." His conscientious integrity, however, availed him not. The court demanded a universal retraction; and nothing short of that could procure him their favour. The tedious malignity of the third day's examination oppressed at length both the mind and body of Huss; and the more so, because he had passed the preceding night sleepless through pain of the tooth-ache. For some

days before, he had also been afflicted with the gravel, and was, in other respects, in a weak state of health. At the close of the examination he was carried back to prison, whither John de Chlum followed him. "Oh what a comfort, said he, was it to me, to see that this nobleman did not disdain to stretch out his arm to a poor heretic in irons, whom all the world, as it were, had forsaken!" In the same letter in which he mentions this, he begs the prayers of his friend, because "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Such is the treatment, which the dearest and most faithful servants of God are frequently called upon to endure from an evil world.—After the departure of Huss, Sigismund, with the most unrelenting barbarity, expressed himself against him, as a heretic worthy of the flames. On the next day a form of retraction was sent to this persecuted prisoner, which, though it was penned in equivocal and ambiguous terms, plainly appeared on the whole, to imply a confession of guilt. Huss therefore refused to sign it; and added,—that he had rather be cast into the sea with a millstone about his neck, than give offence to his pious neighbours by acknowledging that to be true, which they knew to be false;—that he had preached patience and constancy to others,—and that he was willing to shew an example of these graces, and hoped by divine assistance to be enabled to do so.

We have constantly seen in the course of this history, that the holiness of heart and life, which real christians have evidenced from age to age, was always connected with the peculiar doctrines of christianity. Sometimes one of these doctrines, and sometimes another, constituted the prominent feature of their profession; but it is in vain to look for men of real holiness and virtue, who were inimical or even indifferent to the fundamentals of the gospel. If there were any one doctrine more particularly insisted on than another by sincere christians, that doctrine was always, in its nature, of considerable importance; and by just connexion it implied and involved the whole of godliness, even though that connection might not be understood or relished in every part by all persons of true piety. Should we then be asked, what peculiar doctrine was maintained and espoused by John Huss, whose holiness and integrity were undoubtedly eminent, the answer is,—It was the doctrine of the depravity of human nature and of the necessity of a divine influence. This I doubt not, will appear sufficiently evident to the evangelical reader, who will take the trouble fully to consider several of the articles, which were objected to him, and also some extracts from his letters; for, notwithstanding that the frequent use of the terms PRE-

DESTINATE, CHOSEN, ELECT, &c. in those articles and extracts, might lead an uninformed and superficial reader to conclude that Huss was merely a speculative defender of the doctrine of absolute decrees, without being an advocate for a real change of heart and personal holiness, it deserves to be remarked, first,—that this reformer used the terms in question precisely in the sense in which they are used in scripture; and secondly, that the doctrine of the total inability of man to save himself, both from the punishment and from the dominion of sin, was the great practical point he had in view.—Among the expressions, which he had used, and which were objected to him, we may mention the following: "The assembly of the predestinated is the holy church, which has neither spot nor wrinkle, which Jesus Christ calls his own: a reprobate is never a member of the holy church." These and similar passages, produced in accusation against him, he partly admitted as his own; and partly qualified by a fair and candid explanation. On the whole, it is very evident, that he gave offence, by studiously distinguishing those, whom God hath chosen to be his peculiar people in Christ, and are evidently pointed out, by their real practical holiness, as different from the common bulk of nominal christians. Even the pope and his cardinals, if not predestinated,^a to him appeared to be no members of the body of Christ. "The church of Christ is,"—says he, from Bernard,—"his own body more evidently, than the body which he delivered for us to death. The church is as it were the 'Barn-floor' of the Lord, in which are the predestinate and the reprobate, the former being as wheat and the latter as chaff." In these subjects he followed the ideas of Augustine, with whose writings he appears to have been much acquainted. Divine influence, therefore, implying and involving all the essentials of the gospel according to the views of Augustine, and evidencing itself in particular persons by real humility, piety, and integrity, was one of the grand doctrinal points of John Huss; and this holy man, defective as he was in christian light, and obscured with much superstition, was yet enabled to distinguish his scriptural creed from that of the mere religion of nature, both in theory and in practice; and he accordingly underwent that cross of Christ from the persecutions of the wicked, which must ever be expected by those who will not allow merely nominal christianity to be the real religion of Jesus.—For it is well known that nothing more irritates those who live according "to the course of this world," than to be told that God has a holy peculiar people, formed for himself to shew forth his praise.

^a Romans viii. 29.
^b Ephesians, chap. ii.

^c 2 Kings, chap. vi. ver. 37.

The following passages are extracted from his letters :

"Almighty God will confirm the hearts of his faithful people, whom he hath chosen before the foundation of the world, that they may receive the eternal crown of glory.—I am greatly comforted with those words of our Saviour, "Happy are ye when men shall hate you, and shall separate you from their company, &c. O precious consolatory lesson, difficult, indeed, not to understand, but to practise in time of tribulation.—Let patience have her perfect work.—It is a light matter to speak of patience, but a great matter to fulfil it.—Our most patient champion himself, who knew that he should rise again the third day, and redeem from damnation all his elect, was troubled in spirit. Yet he, though sorely troubled, said to his disciples, let not your hearts be troubled, &c.—I trust stedfastly, the Lord will make me a partaker of the crown with you, and with all them who love the Lord Jesus Christ.—Merciful Christ ! draw us weak creatures after thee ; for except thou draw us, we are not able to follow thee. Give us a courageous spirit that it may be ready ; for without thee we can do nothing. Give us an upright faith, a firm hope and perfect charity."

The integrity of the Bohemian martyr was severely tried by the solicitations of several persons. But divine grace had given him the virtue of sincerity to a very eminent degree, so that the very least equivocation was abominable in his eyes. Even his enemy Palatz, inwardly reverencing the virtue of the man, took pains to induce him to retract. Put yourselves in my place, said Huss, what would you do, if you were required to retract certain errors, which you were sure you never held. "I own, it is an hard case," answered Palatz, with tears in his eyes. It is not improbable, that this man had never meant actually to expose his countryman to the flames ; and it is extremely probable that he had never before considered the dilemma to which the spirit of persecution must reduce a person of real integrity, namely, either to perjure himself, or to be consumed in the flames. One of the doctors, who visited Huss, said to him, "if the council should tell you, that you have but one eye, though you have really two, you would be obliged to agree with the council." "While God keeps me in my senses," replied Huss, "I would not say such a thing against my conscience, on the intreaty or command of the whole world."

This holy personage foreseeing his end to be near, redeemed the little time which was left to him, by writing letters, which were publicly read at Prague, in his chapel at Bethlehem, the once delightful scene of his

ministry. One of these letters may be considered as a farewell sermon addressed to his flock. He intreats them to adhere solely to the word of God, and not to follow himself, if they have observed any thing in him not agreeable to it ; and he particularly begs them to pardon him, where he had been guilty of any levity in discourse or behaviour. He begs them to be grateful to John de Chlum and another nobleman, who had been faithful to him in his sufferings. He adds, that he hears no news of Jerom, except that he was a prisoner like himself, waiting for the sentence of death ; and he concludes with an earnest prayer that the gospel of Christ may be always preached to them in his dear chapel of Bethlehem. His firmness was that of a christian, not of a stoic ; founded in humility, not in pride. He experienced some attacks of the fears of death ; but soon recovered his courage. "I am far," said he, "from the strength and zeal of the Apostle Peter. Jesus Christ has not given me his talents : besides I have more violent conflicts, and a greater number of shocks to sustain. I say therefore, that, placing all my confidence in Jesus Christ, I am determined, when I hear my sentence, to continue steadfast in the truth, even to the death, as the saints and you shall help me." Thus modestly does he write to a friend ; and it is, from his private epistolary correspondence, that the most genuine features of his character may be drawn. John Huss appears indeed to have been one of those of whom "the world was not worthy :"^m and of no mere man could it ever be said with more propriety, that the world hated him, because he testified of it, that its works were evil. Undoubtedly his open rebukes of sin, both by his public preaching and writings, and by the uniform purity and innocence of his manners, had inflamed the tempers of the great men of the age, both in church and state ; yet, it was scarcely to be expected, that the council of Constance, should, even upon their own principles, proceed, without the least proof of heresy, to condemn to the flames the most upright of men, because he refused to acknowledge that to be true which he believed to be false ; or that this same council should justify the deceit and perfidy of their Imperial President : Their conduct therefore, is to be considered as a striking proof not only of the general depravity of human nature, but also of the general wickedness and hypocrisy of the Roman church at that time.

The council settled before hand after what manner he was to be treated, in case he should retract.ⁿ He was to have been degraded from the priesthood, and to be forever shut up between four walls. This was the only reward which the unfeeling tyrants

^m Fox, Vol. I. p. 718.
ⁿ Ephesians. v. 16.

^m Heb. xi. 38.

ⁿ Loefling, p. 363, Vol. I.

had intended to bestow on him, in the event of his wounding his conscience to gratify them. To lay the whole weight of blame on the popes, on account of the enormities of the Roman church, is to view that church superficially. It was generally and systematically corrupt: it had recently deposed three popes: it was, at present, without a pope; and yet could be guilty of crimes, not less heinous than some of the worst, which the popes ever committed.

The council,—so Huss wrote the night before his death,—exhorted him to pronounce every one of the articles, which had been extracted from his books, to be erroneous: but he absolutely refused to accede to so unreasonable a requisition; except they could, from the scriptures, PROVE his doctrines to be erroneous, as they asserted them to be. It may be proper to have mentioned this circumstance here by way of anticipation, to obviate a misrepresentation which was studiously made concerning John Huss, as if he had PROMISED to retract. On the contrary, it appears that he persisted to the last in the defence of his innocence with UNSHAKEN INTEGRITY.

While the council was preparing the formalities of his condemnation, they enacted a decree to forbid the reception of the communion in both kinds; and assigned no other reason for it, except their regard to the doctrine of transubstantiation; at the same time they owned that, IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH, THIS SACRAMENT IN BOTH KINDS WAS RECEIVED BY THE BELIEVERS.* Thus the triumph of the Roman church seemed to be complete. She dared to own, that she contradicted primitive christianity; and she dared to enact that those, who refused to obey HER institutions, though confessedly contrary to those of the primitive church, ought to be treated as heretics! What is this but open, undisguised, opposition to the commands of Jesus Christ? And what other name but that of antichrist can so well express the corrupt and presumptuous domination of the Romish hierarchy?

But there is a voice in natural conscience, which it is not in the power of Satan easily to silence. Sigismund, inwardly ashamed of his baseness and perfidy, towards Huss, wished to save the life of that good man, though he saw that, according to the wicked policy of the council, this was not to be done, except the prisoner could be induced to forswear himself. Many persons, to second the views of the emperor, endeavoured to overcome the constancy of Huss: even the council sent several deputations to him for that purpose. One of this martyr's letters throws some light on these transactions. "Palets," says he, "attempts to

persuade me, that I ought to abjure, because of the great advantage which will accrue to me from it. I told him, that to be condemned and burned was not so scandalous, as to be guilty of falsehood." He speaks thus of his other accuser Causis. "That poor man has been often with the deputies before the prison. I heard him say to the guards; if it please God, we shall shortly burn this heretic, who has cost me so many florins in prosecuting him."

He wrote about the same time to a preacher of his acquaintance concerning the decree of the council lately mentioned. "They have condemned the communion of the cup with regard to the laity, as an error, and have condemned of heresy every one, who violates their decree, though they have nothing but custom to oppose to an institution of Jesus Christ."

The council now ordered the works of Huss to be burnt; on occasion of which circumstance, he writes to his friends; "That he was not discouraged on this account; that Jeremiah's books met with the same treatment; nevertheless the Jews suffered the calamities, which that faithful prophet had foretold.—Consider, that they have condemned the pope, their god upon earth, for his crimes, particularly for selling indulgences, bishoprics, and the like. But in this they are his accomplices. The bishop of Litomissel, who is at the council, went twice to buy the archbishopric of Prague, but others outbade him.—They follow this traffic even at Constance, where one sells and another buys a benefice."

At length he received another solemn deputation, in which were two cardinals and some prelates, who tried their utmost to induce him to recant. Huss, however, persisted in his integrity, and announced his resolution in terms of great vehemence and solemnity. Having withstood one more attempt of the emperor to shake his resolution, he was thus accosted by his friend John de Chlum. "I am a person of no learning, my dear Huss, and unfit to advise so learned a person as you. If you are convinced of any error, I venture however to advise you to retract it; if not, to endure whatever punishments shall be inflicted on you, rather than to do violence to your conscience!" An instance this of common sense and artless honesty, which deserves to be contrasted with the subtlety and intriguing spirit of the council. Huss answered with tears, that he called God to witness, how ready he was to retract sincerely and upon oath, the moment he was convinced of an error by the testimony of Holy Scripture. One of the prelates observed, "For my part I am not so presumptuous, as to prefer my private opinion to that

of the whole council. "Let the meanest member of that council, replied Huss, convince me of a mistake, and I am perfectly disposed to obey their injunctions." Some of the bishops observed, "See, how obstinate he is in his errors."

He was now presented before the council in the presence of the emperor, the princes of the empire, and of an incredible concourse of people. The bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from those words of St. Paul, "that the body of sin might be destroyed." With the grossest ignorance or the most virulent and indecent malice he perverted the words to the purpose of the council, "Destroy heresies and errors," said he, "but chiefly that obstinate heretic," pointing to the prisoner. While they were reading the articles extracted or pretended to be extracted from his work, Huss was beginning to answer to each distinctly, but was told that he might answer to them all at the same time, and was ordered at present to be silent. He expostulated against the unreasonableness of this injunction in vain. Lifting up his hands to heaven, he begged the prelates in God's name to indulge him with the freedom of speech, that he might justify himself before the people; after which, said he, "you may dispose of me, as you shall think fit." But the prelates persisting in their refusal, he knelt down, and with uplifted eyes and hands, and with a loud voice, he recommended his cause to the Judge of all the earth. Being accused in the article of the sacrament of having maintained that the material bread remains after consecration, he loudly declared, that he had never believed or taught so. Nothing could be more iniquitous than this charge, which he had fully refuted on his former examination. But the council was determined to burn him as a heretic, and it behoved them to exhibit at any rate, some show of proving his heretical opinions. A still more shameless accusation was introduced. It was said, "A certain doctor bears witness, that Huss gave out, that he should become the fourth person in the Trinity." "What is the name of that doctor," replied the prisoner, protesting against the charge as a flagrant calumny, and making an orthodox confession of his faith on the subject of the trinity. Nevertheless, the bishop, who had read the accusation, refused to mention the doctor's name. Being again upbraided with his appeal to Jesus Christ, "See," said he with his hands lifted up toward Heaven, "most gracious Saviour, how the council condemns as an error what thou hast prescribed and practised, when overborne by enemies, thou committedst thy cause to God thy Father, leaving us this example, that when we are oppressed, we may have recourse to the judgment of

God. Yes, continued he, turning toward the assembly, I have maintained and do still maintain, that an appeal made to Jesus Christ is most just and right, because he can neither be corrupted by bribes, nor be deceived by false witnesses, nor be over-reached by any artifice.—I came voluntarily to this council, under the public faith of the emperor here present." In pronouncing these last words, he looked earnestly at Sigismund, who blushed at the sudden and unexpected rebuke.¹

Sentence was now pronounced against both John Huss and his books; and he was ordered to be degraded. The bishops clothed him with the priests' garments, and put a chalice into his hands. While they were thus employed, he said, that "the Jews put a white garment on our Lord Jesus Christ to mock him, when Herod delivered him to Pilate," and he made reflections of the same kind on each of the sacerdotal ornaments. When he was fully apparelled, the prelates once more exhorted him to retract; and to this exhortation he replied with his usual firmness. They then caused him to come down from the stool on which he stood, and pronounced these words, "O cursed Jew, who having forsaken the council of peace, art entered into that of the Jews, we take this chalice from thee, in which is the blood of Jesus Christ." But God was with the martyr, who cried aloud, "I trust in the mercy of God, I shall drink of it this very day in his kingdom." Then they stripped him of all his vestments, one after another, uttering a curse on stripping him of each. Having completed his degradation by the addition of some other ridiculous insults not worthy of a distinct relation, they put a paper coronet on his head, on which they had painted three devils with this inscription, ARCH-HERETIC, and said, "We devote thy soul to the infernal devils." "I am glad," said the martyr, "to wear this crown of ignominy for the love of him, who wore a crown of thorns."

When the painted paper was placed upon his head, one of the bishops said, "Now we commit thy soul to the devil." "But I," said Huss, "commit my spirit into thy hands, O Lord Jesus Christ, unto thee I commend my spirit which thou hast redeemed."² The council now ordered this sentence to be pronounced, namely, "The holy synod of Constance declares, that John Huss ought to be given up to the secular power, and does accordingly so give him up, considering that the church of God has no more to do with him."

¹ We are told, that when Charles V. was solicited at the Diet of Worms to arrest Luther, notwithstanding the safe conduct which he had granted him, he replied, "I should not choose to blush with my predecessor Sigismund." *Op. Huss. Tom. ii.*
² Fox, Acts, &c. Vol. I. p. 709.

Sigismund committed the execution of Huss to the elector-Palatine. The martyr walking amidst his guards, declared his innocence to the people. When he came near the place of execution, he knelt and prayed with such fervour, that some of the people said aloud, "what this man has done before, we know not; but now we hear him offer up most excellent prayers to God." The elector Palatine prevented him from speaking to the people, and ordered him to be burned. "Lord Jesus," said Huss aloud, "I humbly suffer this cruel death for thy sake, and I pray thee to forgive all my enemies." His paper crown falling from off his head, the soldiers put it on again, saying, that it must be burnt with the devils, whom he had served. His neck was fastened to the stake, and the wood was piled about him. The elector advanced to exhort him once more on the often repeated subject of retraction. "What I have written and taught,"—these were the words of Huss,—“was in order to rescue souls from the power of the devil, and to deliver them from the tyranny of sin; and I do gladly seal, what I have written and taught, with my blood.” The elector withdrawing, the fire was kindled, and Huss was soon suffocated, having called on God as long as he could speak.

Many other circumstances of the cruel indignity with which he was treated, it is not necessary to relate. It is more to our purpose to observe what Æneas Sylvius a Roman Catholic historian records of John Huss and of Jerom of Prague. "They went," says he, "to the stake, as to a banquet; not a word fell from them, which discovered the least timidity; they sung hymns in the flames to the last gasp without ceasing."

Thus by a death; which has affixed eternal infamy on the council of Constance, slept in Jesus the celebrated John Huss, one of the most upright and blameless of men. Human depravity has not often produced a scene so completely iniquitous, and so much calculated to bring disgrace on the Roman church. The uncommon pains taken to prevent his death by retraction, demonstrates the conviction of the council, that they were doing what they could not justify to their *own* consciences. At the same time the grace of God was marvellously displayed in supporting and strengthening the martyr, who appears indeed to have exhibited all the graces of a true disciple of Christ. It has often been said, that good men would not suffer persecution, if they were not so bigoted in points of sentiment. But what shall we say of the case before us? A man of the most irreproachable character suffers the most cruel death, attended with a severe course of insult and indignity, even though

he could not be proved to have held any point of doctrine absolutely distinct from the creed of his adversaries:—But he was a holy man; and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

The parts and acquirements of John Huss seem to have been above mediocrity; and yet neither of them are by any means to be ranked in the highest class. A vein of good sense runs through all his writings; inasmuch that Luther calls him the most rational expounder of scripture he had ever met with.—His natural temper was mild and condescending; all the traces of harshness or severity which are to be found in this reformer must be looked for in his contests with vice.—The events of his life prove him to have possessed an exquisite tenderness of conscience, together with great piety and almost unexampled fortitude. Moreover, as the piety of this champion of the faith, was perfectly free from enthusiasm or mysticism, so was his fortitude unsullied with vanity or ostentation. A mind of equal energy and resolution, at the same time less scrupulous and conscientious than that of Huss, somewhat less attentive to religious practice, and more inquisitive and solicitous concerning matters of opinion,—such a mind, it may be supposed, would probably have got soon a rid of the chains of superstition. There is, however, good reason to think that he had gained so considerable an insight into the prevailing ecclesiastical abuses, that it was not possible for him to have been held much longer in slavery by papal corruptions. But the wicked decree of the council of Constance shortened his life.

The council, with Sigismund at their head, still preserved the most solemn forms of religion, though their conduct continued to be destitute of humility, justice, and humanity. Gerson preached a sermon concerning the reformation of the church, the object of which seems to have been, to transfer to the general council, that despotic power, which had been supposed, on divine authority, to rest with the pope. In the mean time Jerom of Prague was repeatedly examined; and he continued to sustain the rigour of his confinement with patience and constancy.

It is remarkable, that a divinity professor, named Bertrand, preached on the necessity of the reformation of the church; and strenuously exhorted the council to use the most speedy and effectual means to correct abuses;—"particularly the insatiable avarice, the excessive ambition, the gross ignorance, the shameful laziness, and the execrable pride of the clergy." The council itself affected to undertake the work of reformation. They could not but be sensible, that the world had

a right to expect it from them: but what hopes could be indulged of success from men, who, at the very same time, gloried in their iniquity; and wrote imperious letters into Bohemia, charging the clergy there to use all possible diligence to extirpate the followers of John Huss; that is, the very persons who had been most sincerely zealous in promoting that same reformation of the clergy, which the council pretended to regard as their capital object.

*Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
Tempus eget.*——— *Vizæ.*

Something even besides solid learning and good sense was requisite for a work of this nature. Gerson excelled in both these qualities. A treatise, which he composed at this time on the trial of spirits, abounds with excellent rules for the detection of feigned revelations and visions, and contributed to prevent the canonization of some pretended saints. But there was not in the council the unction² from the Holy One, of which St. John speaks; that is, the true faith of Christ and real Christian humility were not the ruling principles in the famous assembly at Constance.

Toward the latter end of the same year 1415, a letter was sent to the council from Bohemia signed by about sixty principal persons, barons, noblemen, and others of Bohemia, an extract of which is as follows;—“We know not from what motive ye have condemned John Huss, bachelor of divinity, and preacher of the gospel. Ye have put him to a cruel and ignominious death, though convicted of no heresy. We wrote in his vindication to Sigismund, king of the Romans. This apology of ours ought to have been communicated to your congregations; but we have been told that ye burnt it in contempt of us. We protest therefore, with the heart as well as with the lips, that John Huss was a man very honest, just, and orthodox; that for many years he conversed among us with godly and blameless manners; that during all those years he explained, to us and to our subjects, the Gospel and the books of the Old and New Testaments, according to the exposition of holy doctors approved by the church; and that he has left writings behind him in which he constantly abhors all heresy. He taught us also to detest every thing heretical. In his discourses he constantly exhorted us to the practice of peace and charity, and his own life exhibited to us a distinguished example of these virtues. After all the inquiry which we have made, we can find no blame attached to the doctrine or to the life of the said John Huss; but on the contrary every thing pious, laudable, and worthy of a true pastor. Ye have not only disgraced us by his condemnation, but have also unmercifully imprisoned, and

perhaps already put to death Jerom of Prague—a man of most profound learning and copious eloquence. Him also ye have condemned unconvicted.—Notwithstanding all that hath passed, we are resolved to sacrifice our lives for the defence of the Gospel of Christ, and of his faithful preachers.”—This letter was unanimously approved of in an assembly of the Bohemian lords held at Prague.

John de Trocznow, chamberlain to Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, known by the name of Zisca, or the one-eyed, was one of the Bohemian nobleman, who highly resented the base conduct of the council. Wenceslaus asking him one day what he was musing upon, I was thinking, said he, on the affront offered to our kingdom by the death of John Huss. “It is out of your power or mine to revenge it,” said the king; “but if you know which way to do it, exert yourself.” From that time Zisca meditated those military projects, for which he was afterwards so famous in history.

The council, startled at the expostulations of the Bohemian lords, yet being still determined to maintain their own unjust authority, at length, partly by promises, and partly by threatenings, induced Jerom of Prague to retract his sentiments. To carry this point they appear to have used their utmost efforts. Nor is it difficult to comprehend their motives. They were anxious to avoid the infamy, which would unavoidably be connected with their execution of another great and good man.—Jerom’s retraction was at first ambiguous and equivocal, afterwards explicit and circumstantial. He anathematized the articles both of Wickliff and of Huss, and declared that he believed every thing which the council believed. He even added, that if in future any doctrine should escape from him contrary to his recantation, he would submit to everlasting punishment!—Thus was disgraced before all the world, and humbled in his own eyes, a man of most excellent morals, of superior parts, and of great learning and fortitude. Reader! this is an event, memorable in the annals of human imbecility. Consider diligently the instruction it affords. The power and the mercy of God, in owning his fallen servant, and in afterwards restoring and supporting him, were magnified, in this instance, in a very striking manner.

Jerom, notwithstanding his retraction, was remanded to prison, where, however, we find he was allowed a little more liberty than before.*

The council, during these transactions, made a constant parade of reforming the church. On sundays and holidays, sermons were preached on that subject from time to time. One preacher said, “When a prelate

* 1 John 2. 20.

† Leinfant, p. 506. Vol. I.

is consecrated, they ask him if he knows the Old and New Testament. Most of them, I will venture to say, cannot affirm this with a safe conscience." This same preacher inveighed in general, with great vehemence against the vices of the clergy, which he might do with little danger to his own person, and with as little probability of profiting his audience, because he always took care at the same time to assert the unlimited power of the pope. Other sermons, to the same purport, were preached, in which the wickedness of the clergy was so keenly reprov'd, that we cannot but conclude that their manners must have been at that time licentious beyond measure. Dr. Abendon of Oxford particularly exhorted bishops and other superior clergymen to apply themselves to the study of the scriptures, rather than to the litigious and lucrative science of the canon law. He inveighed against the non-residence and the simony of the prelates. The council by their silence could bear to give a sanction to these exhortations, though they had just before condemned to the flames a pastor, who had been singularly exempt from all these vices. There were also those, who, not content with the unhappy retraction of Jerom, insisted upon his being tried a second time; and Gerson himself, with his usual zeal against heresy, was not ashamed to use his utmost efforts in promoting this most iniquitous measure.

The council actually proceeded to examine Jerom again upon the articles formerly exhibited against him, and also upon fresh articles, collected in Bohemia by certain Carmelite friars, and now for the first time brought forward. The prisoner refused to be sworn, because they denied him the liberty of defence.

Then it was that this great man, whom a long series of affliction and cruel persecution, and above all, the consciousness of his late prevarication had brought into the lowest distress, began to exhibit that strength of mind, that force of genius and eloquence, and that integrity and fortitude, which will be the admiration of all ages. How bitterly he had repented in secret, and mourned over his fall, and with what exercises of soul he had been disciplined in secret, the intelligent christian may easily conceive, though we have no particular account on record. We know indeed, that after he had acted against his conscience, he retired from the council with a heavy heart. His chains had been taken from him, but the load was transferred from his body to his mind; and the carresses of those about him served only to mock his sorrow. The anguish of his own reflections rendered his prison a more gloomy solitude than he had ever found it before. Jerom, however, was not an apostate; and the God whom he served, had compassion on the in-

firmities of his nature, and did not desert him in his humiliation. No—He made his latter end to be blessed, and glorious.

"How unjust is it," exclaimed this Christian hero, "that ye will not hear me! Ye have confined me three hundred and forty days in several prisons, where I have been cramped with irons, almost poisoned with dirt and stench, and pinched with the want of all necessaries. During this time ye always gave to my enemies a hearing, but refused to hear me so much as a single hour. I wonder not, that, since ye have indulged them with so long and so favourable an audience, they should have had the address to persuade you, that I am a heretic, an enemy to the faith, a persecutor of the clergy, and a villain. Thus prejudiced ye have judged me unheard, and ye still refuse to hear me. Remember however, that ye are but men; and as such ye are fallible, and may suffer others to impose on you. It is said, that all learning and all wisdom is collected in this council. The more then does it behove you to take heed that ye act not rashly, lest ye should be found to act unjustly. I know that it is the design of this council to inflict sentence of death upon me. But when all is done, I am an object of small importance, who must die sooner or later. Therefore what I say is more for your sakes than my own. It ill becomes the wisdom of so many great men to pass an unjust decree against me, and by this to establish a president for consequences much more pernicious than my death can be." The council was so far moved by his reasonings, that they resolved, after he had answered to the articles, to grant him liberty of speech. All the articles were read to him, one after another; and his answers were delivered with an acuteness and dexterity, which astonished the court. When he was upbraided with the grossest calumnies, he stood up, with extended hands, and in a sorrowful tone cried out, "Which way, Fathers, shall I turn, whom shall I call upon for help, or to bear witness to my innocence? Shall I make my address to you? But my persecutors have entirely alienated your minds from me by saying that I am myself a persecutor of my judges.—If ye gave them credit, I have nothing to hope for." But, it being impossible to bring the affair to an issue at that time because of the number of the accusations, the court was adjourned to another day.

The former examination took place on May 23d, 1416, and he was called again before the council according to adjournment, on the succeeding 26th of the same month.—On that day the remaining articles were read to him. After he had answered all the charges, owning some, denying others, and

clearing up the rest, he was told,—that though he had been convicted of heresy by proofs and witnesses most unexceptionable, yet they gave him liberty to speak, so that he might defend himself or retract; only, if he persisted in his errors, he must expect judgment without mercy.

Jerom, having gained this liberty of speech, though with much difficulty and opposition, determined to avail himself of the opportunity. He began with invoking the grace of God so to govern his heart and his lips that he might advance nothing but what should conduce to the salvation of his soul. "I am not ignorant," continued he, "that many excellent men have been borne down by false witnesses, and unjustly condemned." He proved this from various instances adduced both from sacred and profane history. "Moses," said he, "was often scandalized by his brethren; Joseph was sold through envy; and afterwards imprisoned upon false reports. Isaiah, Daniel, and almost all the prophets were unjustly persecuted. And was not John the Baptist, Jesus Christ himself, and most of his apostles, put to death as ungodly, seditious persons? In other books as well as the bible we have similar instances. Socrates was most unjustly condemned by his countrymen; he might indeed have saved his life by doing violence to his conscience, but he preferred death to a disingenuous recantation. Plato, Anaxagoras, Zeno, and many others were maltreated in various ways. "It is a shameful thing," continued Jerom, "for one priest to be condemned unjustly by another; but the height of iniquity is, when this is done by a council, and a college of priests." He gave so probable an account of the reasons of the malice of his adversaries, that for some moments he seemed to have convinced his judges. "I came here of my own accord," said he, "to justify myself, which a man conscious of guilt would scarcely have done. Those who know the course of my life and studies, know that my time has been spent in exercises and works of a very different tendency from any thing wicked or heretical. As to my sentiments, the most learned men of all times have had different opinions concerning religion; they disputed about it, not to combat the truth, but to illustrate it. St. Augustine, and his contemporary St. Jerome, were not always of the same opinion, yet were not on that account accused of heresy. I shall make no apology for my sentiments, because I am not conscious of maintaining any error, nor shall I retract, because it becomes not me to retract the false accusations of my enemies." He then extolled John Huss, vindicated the innocence of that holy martyr, and declared that he was ready to suffer after his example. "This pastor," said he, "by finding fault with the abuses of the clergy, and the pride

of the prelates, did not act against the church of God." He declared that he hoped one day to see his accusers, and to call them to judgment before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge of the world. He accused the council of an act of high injustice in trying him a second time on the same indictment, and declared that he should never acknowledge the authority of the new commissioners, but should look on them as judges sitting in the chair of pestilence. "I came," said he, "to Constance to defend John Huss, because I had advised him to go thither, and had promised to come to his assistance, in case he should be oppressed.—Nor am I ashamed here to make public confession of my own cowardice. I confess, and tremble while I think of it, that through fear of punishment by fire, I basely consented against my conscience to the condemnation of the doctrine of Wickliff and Huss." He then declared that he disowned his recantation, as the greatest crime of which he had ever been guilty; and that he was determined to his last breath to adhere to the principles of those two men, which were as sound and pure, as their lives were holy and blameless. He excepted indeed Wickliff's opinion of the sacrament, and declared his agreement with the Roman church in the article of transubstantiation. Having concluded his speech, he was carried back to prison, and was there visited by several persons, who hoped to reclaim him, but in vain.

On May 30th, Jerom being brought again before the council, the bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from these words, "he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart." He exhorted the prisoner not to shew himself incorrigible, as he had hitherto done. He paid some tribute of praise to his extraordinary abilities, and at the same time extolled the lenity and generosity with which he had been treated by the council. The reader, now in possession of the facts, might smile at this gross flattery, if the subject were less grave and less affecting. Jerom, raising himself on a bench, undertook to confute the preacher. He declared again, that he had done nothing in his whole life, of which he so bitterly repented, as his recantation; that he revoked it from his very soul, as also the letter which he had been induced to write on that subject to the Bohemians; that he had been guilty of the meanest falsehood by making that recantation; and that he esteemed John Huss a holy man. At the same time he declared, that he knew no heresy to which Huss was attached, unless they should call by that name his open disapprobation of the vices of the clergy; and that if after this declaration credit should still be given to the false witness borne a-

against him, he should consider the fathers of the council themselves as unworthy of all belief.—“This pious man,” said Jerom, alluding to John Huss, “could not bear to see the revenues of the church, which were principally designed for the maintenance of the poor, and for works of liberality, spent in debauchery with women, in feasts, bounds, furniture, gaudy apparel, and other expenses, unworthy of christianity.”

The firmness, eloquence, and zeal of Jerom, sensibly affected the council. They proposed to him once more to retract. But he replied, “Ye have determined to condemn me unjustly; but after my death I shall leave a sting in your consciences, and a worm that shall never die. I appeal to the Sovereign Judge of all the earth, in whose presence ye must appear to answer me.” After sentence had been pronounced against him, he was delivered to the secular power. He was treated with scorn and insult, similar to that which his friend Huss had experienced. He put the mitre with his own hands on his head,⁴ saying that he was glad to wear it for the sake of him, who was crowned with one of thorns. As he went to execution, he sung the apostle's creed, and the hymns of the church, with a loud voice and a cheerful countenance. He kneeled at the stake, and prayed. Being then bound, he raised his voice, and sung a paschal hymn then much in vogue in the church.⁵

Hail! happy day, and ever be adored,
When hell was conquered by great heaven's Lord.

The executioner approaching to the pile behind his back, lest Jerom should see him, “Come forward,” said the martyr to him, “and put fire to it before my face.” He continued alive in the flames a full quarter of an hour. And there is the most unanimous testimony given by all writers, Hussite and Roman Catholic, to the heroic courage and fortitude with which he sustained the torment. When he was much scorched with the fury of the fire, and almost smothered in its flame, he was heard to cry out, “O Lord God, have mercy on me! have mercy on me!” And a little afterward, “Thou knowest how I have loved thy truth.” By and by, the wind parted the flames, and exhibited his body full of large blisters, a dreadful spectacle to the beholders; yet even then his lips are said to have continued still moving, as if his mind was actuated by intense devotion.

Poggius, a celebrated Florentine, who had been the secretary of John XXIII. and was present at these scenes, has left the most unequivocal testimony to the abilities, fortitude, and eloquence of Jerom. I have already given

the most material historical facts, which he mentions.

“I confess,” says this writer, “I never knew the art of speaking carried so near the model of ancient eloquence. It was amazing to hear with what force of expression, fluency of language, and excellent reasoning he answered his adversaries; nor was I less struck with the gracefulness of his manner, the dignity of his action, and the firmness and constancy of his whole behaviour. It grieved me to think so great a man was labouring under so atrocious an accusation. Whether this accusation be just or not, God knows: I make no inquiry into the merits of the case; I rest satisfied with the decision of my superiors.”

“The assembly,” continues Poggius, “was very unruly and indecent; yet it is incredible with what acuteness the prisoner answered, and with what surprising dexterity he ward off every stroke of his adversaries. Nothing escaped him: his whole behaviour was truly great and pious.”

“He took great pains to shew that very little credit was due to the witnesses produced against him. He laid open the sources of their hatred to him; and in that way made a strong impression on the minds of his hearers. He lamented the cruel and unjust death of that holy man John Huss, and said he was armed with a full resolution to follow the steps of that blessed martyr.”

“It was impossible to hear this pathetic orator without emotion. Every ear was captivated, and every heart touched. Throughout his whole oration he shewed a most amazing strength of memory. He had been confined almost a year in a dungeon, the severity of which usage he complained of, but in the language of a great and good man.—In this horrid place he was deprived of books and paper, yet notwithstanding this, and the constant anxiety of his mind, he was no more at a loss for proper authorities and quotations, than if he had spent the intermediate time at leisure in his study.”

“His voice was sweet and full, and his action every way proper to express either indignation or to raise pity; but he made no affected application to the passions. Firm and intrepid he stood before the council; collected in himself, and not only contemning, but seeming desirous of death. The greatest character in ancient story could not possibly have exceeded him.—If there be any justice in history, this man will be admired by all posterity.—I call him a prodigious man, and the epithet is not extravagant. I was an eyewitness of his whole behaviour, and could easily be more prolix on a subject so copious.”

Such is the testimony of this ingenuous

⁴ Lenzant, Vol. I. p. 591.

⁵ *Salva, festa dies, loco venerabilis arce,
Qua Deus infernum vicit, et astra tenens.*

⁶ Lenzant, Vol. I. p. 592.

papist to an adversary. His friend Aretin, to whom he wrote the letter of which the above is an extract, was much less candid.—“You attribute,” says he, “to this man more than I could wish. You ought at least to write more cautiously of these things.”—It has been well observed^a that Poggius would probably have written more cautiously, had he written a few days afterward.—But his letter is dated on the very day of Jerom’s execution. It came warm from the writer’s heart, and proves sufficiently what he thought of the council of Constance and their proceedings.

Notwithstanding this valuable memoir, I could wish to have been enabled to give a more edifying account of the martyrdom of Jerom: but in this point the materials of history are defective. We must ever expect that writers will record what they esteem important; and pass over what they conceive is better buried in oblivion. Unless, therefore, they have some taste for evangelical principles, and evangelical practice, they will take no notice of many things, which to them appear bordering upon fanaticism or enthusiasm.—In the instance before us, indeed, it is very probable, that Jerom himself had no very accurate or systematical acquaintance with the truth of the gospel. The knowledge, however, which he had, doubtless respected the essential doctrines of Christianity; and his spirit and constancy in suffering, his dependence on the grace of Christ, his joyful expectation of a blessed resurrection, and his humble confession of sinfulness and unworthiness, sufficiently distinguish him from the Stoic philosopher, or the mere moralist, who, whatever portion he may have of the first of these qualities, is totally void of all rest. It is remarkable, that Poggius observes, in the same letter, that “Jerom met his fate with a cheerful countenance and with more than Stoical constancy.”

Among other valuable purposes to which the council of Constance was rendered subservient under Divine Providence, this was not of the least importance,—that the wickedness of the ecclesiastical system, then prevalent in Europe, was demonstrated before all the world. All the knowledge and ability, which Europe could afford, was collected at Constance, yet the able and learned fathers of this council were so far from reforming the evils of what they called the church, that they proved it to be antichrist more certainly than ever. It could no longer be said, that the particular character of such or such popes was the cause of the crimes of the clergy; the whole of the then clerical establishment concurred in support of iniquity.

I have already taken notice of the confes-

sion, which in the sermon preached at Constance, they themselves made of the extreme wickedness of the church. Another remarkable instance of the same kind occurred on Whitsunday, the seventh of June, a very little time after the death of Jerom. A doctor preached a sermon from these words: “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” “Instead of the seven gifts,” says the preacher, “which God granted to the apostles, I fear that the devil keeps his pentecost in the hearts of most of the clergy, and that he has inspired them with the seven contrary vices.” He then gave a catalogue of those vices.

But let not malicious infidelity exult in these incontrovertible proofs of the corrupt state of the church. One of the essential doctrines of christianity, namely, original sin, or the native depravity of man, as an apostate creature, is strongly illustrated by the general wickedness of merely nominal christians. The real gospel itself was then neither understood, nor preached, nor valued in the Roman church. Hence the natural wickedness of mankind met with no resistance; even the papists could see that the whole church was vicious in its head and members, yet they trifled respecting sins with the most scandalous levity, and persecuted to death those very persons, who earnestly opposed the corruption of the times.

All this, however, affords no just ground of triumph to the infidel. The mere nominal christian is, in a scriptural sense, an unbeliever as well as himself; and while neither of these characters OVERCOMES THE WORLD, because he has not true FAITH,¹ it is abundantly evident, and I trust it has appeared so from the course of this history, that where real christianity is understood, and received, there sincerity and all genuine virtues do actually thrive, and adorn the gospel.

In the year 1417, on the day of Epiphany, a sermon was preached in full council, which described the abuses of the church in so strong a manner, that if the preacher had intended to justify the reformation attempted by Huss and Jerom, and completed a hundred years after in several parts of Europe by the protestant reformers, he could not have added much to the vehemence of his invectives.—The clergy were by him taxed with pride and the love of power, with the bad distribution of benefices, the mal-administration of the sacraments, the neglect of the study of the scriptures and of the preaching of the gospel, and the injustice of their ecclesiastical decrees. “Abomination,” cried he, “appears even within these walls, nor are we without instances both of the most scandalous passions, and the basest actions.” Could a preacher have been permitted with impunity to draw so frightful a picture of the

^a Gilpin’s Jerom.

¹ 1 John v. 4, 5.

face of the church in full council, if it had not been corrupt in the extreme, and must there not have been a radical apostacy from the real faith of Christ, where such fruits were suffered to abound?

In this year the followers of Huss, under the famous Zisca and Nicolas de Hussinetz, began to exert themselves in opposition to the hierarchy, but certainly in a manner by no means agreeable to the genius of christianity. They made use of fire and sword; and the latter of these leaders is said to have collected together in a mountain, which was afterwards called Tabor,* forty thousand Hussites, to have arranged them in companies, and administered to them the communion in both kinds. This last point of ecclesiastical regulation seems to have been the predominant article of the faith of the majority of the party, so little did they understand the nature of the gospel! It was indeed the great defect of this whole Bohemian reformation, that, zealous as it was against the popish abominations, it entered not into the genuine, essential doctrines of the gospel with energy and perspicuity; and thus, as must ever be the case, while external practice is the principal object, these reformers were not able to improve, in any considerable degree, that very practice to which they directed their chief attention. Instead of laying the axe to the root, instead of expounding the doctrines of grace, and preaching the real faith of Christ, and patiently suffering persecution, they took the cause into their own hands, and avenged themselves of their enemies by the sword. Their ill success in the issue, compared with the decisive victories gained over popery afterwards at the reformation by those who preached the real scripture-doctrine of justification before God, and who allowed the use of no other arms against popery than "FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE," gives us a salutary lesson, how upon all occasions, in this earthly scene of the trial of the patience and resignation of the righteous, divine truth ought to be defended. To be incited by a zeal, however flaming, against the errors and evils of popery, is not sufficient: it behoves the christian champion to fight with spiritual, not with carnal weapons, to regulate his zeal by christian knowledge, humility, faith, meekness, and patience, and to aim chiefly at the purification of the heart by the practical use of the doctrine of Christ crucified, under the influence of the Divine Spirit. But in these things the Hussites were poorly furnished; and they miscarried, because they attempted to cleanse the OUTSIDE OF THE CUP AND FLATTER, before they had cleansed that WHICH IS WITHIN.¹

It was a gloomy season of the church when the majority of those who had the greatest sincerity in religion, made their capital object to be a sacramental^m circumstance, though certainly scriptural and perfectly well founded. The fact is, they understood very little of the native depravity of man, on which the use and necessity of the gospel depend. — A gloomy season truly! when two men, of talents and learning, and uncommonly honest and upright, lost their lives for the support of a good conscience; and when even these, who, it is not to be doubted, died in the faith of Jesus,—possessed little clearness of understanding in that faith, and were encumbered with so much rubbish of superstition as to be incapable of giving clear and effectual instruction to their followers and admirers. And further, when the general mass of christians, even all the dignitaries assembled at Constance, could do no more than acknowledge the necessity of reformation, while many of them constantly practised the foulest abominations, and were ready to burn in the flames as heretics any persons, whose knowledge, and zeal, and morals, and conduct, conveyed, by a laudable contrast, a censure on their own principles and practice. — The preciousness of real gospel-light, and the duty of cherishing and obeying it, when it is once understood, was never more strikingly evinced.

Whether this account may be thought to bear too hard upon the character of the clergy at that time in general, and of the council in particular, let the reader judge when he has attended to a few extracts from a sermon of Bernard, a French abbot. This divine told the council, that, "with very few exceptions, they were an assembly of Pharisees, who made a farce of religion and the church, under the mask of processions, and other external acts of devotion. "I am sorry," proceeds he, "to say it, that in our days the catholic faith is reduced to nothing; hope is turned into a rash presumption, and the love of God and our neighbour is quite extinct. Among the laity, falsehood bears the chief sway; and avarice predominates among the clergy. Among the prelates there is nothing but malice, iniquity, &c. At the pope's court there is no sanctity; law-suits and quarrels being the felicity of that court, and imposture its delight." He then exhorted them to make a real reformation, to punish the guilty, and to choose a good pope. This zealous preacher saw not the root of all these evils, namely, the lamentable departure from christian principles; and, like many other declaimers against vice, he knew no remedy but the arguments of mere moral suasion and external discipline. The power of the blood of Christ, in purging the con-

J Dubravius.

* The Hussites erected tents in the mountain. And the word Tabor means TENT in the Bohemian language. The mountain Tabor is only a few miles from Prague.

¹ Matt. xxvii. 26.

^m Communion in both kinds.

one to oppose the ambition of the Italians. Not only the French, but even the English, strenuous as they had been for the correction of abuses while Halam lived, deserted the emperor; and he was left in a minority with his Germans. The memorial of this last nation deserves to be mentioned. They complained, that "the popes had assumed to themselves the judgment of all causes, both ecclesiastical and civil:—that, by a horrid abuse even more scandalous than simony, they taxed and rated crimes like merchandise; selling pardons of sins for ready money, and granting indulgences altogether unusual; that they admitted persons of licentious manners into sacred orders, and that since offices were become thus saleable, no one thought knowledge and virtue to be necessary qualifications."

It is extraordinary, that any modern writers should undertake to vindicate the papacy from the charges of protestants, when it appears repeatedly, that nothing could be said worse of it by its enemies, than what was confessed by the very members of the church of Rome. It is very true that the conduct of these members of the Romish church was in the main inconsistent with their professions and declarations. With what face could these Germans charge Huss with heresy, for saying the very same things which they themselves did? And why should Luther be condemned as too severe against the practice of indulgences, when he only represented that grand corruption in the same light, in which it had been openly represented by his ancestors in this council? But so imperious were the Italian cardinals, that they used very threatening language, accusing both the emperor, and those who favoured his views, of heresy. They also added craft to their menaces, and by degress drew over the German deputies themselves to their party; and at length Sigismund, being left alone, consented that the choice of a pope should be previous to the reformation. This was all that the Italians desired: for Martin and his cardinals contrived to elude the wishes of the nations for reform. And thus,—the French, who, with Gerson as their adviser, had condemned the upright servants of God,—the Germans, who, with Sigismund at their head, had supported the accusation against them,—and the English who had persecuted the followers of Wickliff, and joined in the cry against Huss and Jerom,—all these very deservedly became the dupes of papal artifice; and the nations were destined for another century to groan under one of the most intolerable of all governments. The glory of God, the truths of the gospel, and the real kingdom of Jesus Christ being kept out of sight by all parties, none of them regarding reformation much further than it concerned their own interested views, nothing that de-

served the name of reformation ensued. Among the valuable lessons to be learnt from the history of the council of Constance, this is one; namely,—Those who really mean to serve God and his Christ, and to profit mankind in religion, whether they be pastors, or synods, must begin,—if the people be in a state of ignorance,—with explaining the written word of God; they must plainly set forth the essential doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ, and then erect the whole structure of their reformation upon those doctrines.

How void the council was of all true knowledge of the scripture-doctrines of salvation, will appear from the bull, by which the pope dissolved that assembly. An extract of it is as follows, "Martin, bishop, servant of the servants of God,—at the request of the sacred council, we dismiss it. —Moreover, by the authority of Almighty God, and of the blessed apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and by our own authority, we grant to all the members of the council plenary absolution of all their sins once in their lives, so that every one of them, within two months after the notification of this privilege has come to his knowledge, may enjoy the benefit of the said absolution in form. We also grant them the same privilege in the moment of death; and we extend it to the domestics, as well as to the masters, on condition, that from the day of the notification, both the one and the other fast every Friday, during a whole year, for the absolution granted to them while alive; and another year for their absolution in the moment of death, unless there be some lawful impediment, in which case they shall do other works of piety. And after the second year they shall be obliged to fast on Fridays during life, or to do some other acts of piety, on pain of incurring the displeasure of Almighty God and of the blessed apostles St. Peter and St. Paul."

I hasten to close the history of this council, because in the latter part of their proceedings there is little that falls within my plan. Martin V., by making agreements with the nations separately, found means to defeat all attempts after any thing that might deserve the name of a general and effectual reformation.—But though this new pontiff seemed reluctant and dilatory in correcting abuses, he soon discovered a disposition sufficiently active in supporting his own authority.

He persecuted the Hussites most vigorously.—These were divided into two bodies, the Calixtines,* who differed from the church of Rome only in the affair of the new communion in both kinds; and the Taborites mentioned above, who are thought to have

* From calix, the cup.

much resembled the Waldenses. A greater encomium, the circumstances of those times being fully considered, could scarcely be passed upon them. But, it is difficult to reconcile this encomium with the accounts of their military ferocity. Most probably, wheat was mixed with the tares; and while one part of the people lived the life of "the faith of the Son of God," the other could produce few marks of zeal in the cause of religion, except those, which were of a bloody and violent kind.

Under the auspices of the council of Constance paganism was extirpated in Samogitia by the king of Poland. Historical justice required that this fact should be mentioned:—yet, I know no evidences of real conversion among the Samogitians; but, the very introduction of christian formalities among idolaters, ought to be esteemed, on the whole, a considerable advantage to a nation.

This celebrated council, which began to sit in 1414, was dissolved in 1418.

If the materials of evangelical history appear by no means in quantity proportioned to the length of this chapter, the importance of the salutary lessons, connected with the information it contains, may be thought a sufficient apology for the defect. A great effort was made by the united wisdom of Europe, but in vain, to effect that reformation, which God alone in his own time produced in such a manner, as to illustrate the divine declaration, namely, Salvation is "not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Learned men of a speculative turn, and of the most impartial and dispassionate temper, have been puzzled to account for the treatment Huss and Jerom met with from the council of Constance. Jerom suffered as an associate and supporter of Huss; and in regard to the latter, the sentence of the council is express, that he was a notorious, scandalous, obstinate, incorrigible, heretic. Lenfant, after a most careful and judicious review of all the circumstances relative to this sentence, is decidedly of opinion that the accusers failed in making out their charges; and that the council therefore were not justified in passing so severe and cruel a sentence. There is no doubt that both Huss and Jerom were victims to the rage and injustice of their unrelenting enemies. But still, in public transactions, even the most abandoned of mankind do not usually lay aside all regard to principles or to the judgment of others.

Several motives, not openly avowed by the council, have been supposed to influence

their minds in the condemnation of John Huss.

1. He always refused to subscribe to the condemnation of Wickliff; and, on many occasions, he had spoken of him as of a holy man. And though he did not agree with the English reformer respecting the Eucharist, he appears to have been a thorough Wickliffite in all those matters which related to the prevailing abuses of ecclesiastical power. Hence it is easy to understand how obnoxious he must have been to corrupt pontiffs and cardinals; and in general, to ambitious and domineering dignitaries of the established hierarchy. Lenfant speaks out when he says "the soundest part of the council of Constance were not materially different from so many Wickliffites and Hussites." The sound part, however, it is to be feared, was but a small part of the whole; and every one must see that by far the greater part of that assembly would concur in thinking it high time to silence a man who was continually exclaiming against the tyranny and irregularities of the clergy.

2. John Huss by his sermons, his writings and his conversation, had certainly contributed to render the clergy of Bohemia odious and contemptible in the eyes of the people. The bishops, therefore, together with the sacerdotal and monastic orders, were sensible that their honours and advantages, their credit and authority would be in the greatest danger, if this zealous reformer should be allowed to return into his own country, and declaim with his usual freedom. The true cause of the commotions, which existed in Bohemia, is allowed by all the authors of that time, without a single exception, to have been the scandalous conduct of the popes, the subversion of discipline, and the entire corruption of the whole ecclesiastical state. A complete reformation therefore was the only adequate remedy. But this, as the event proved, was not to be expected from a corrupt hierarchy.—It was far more probable that the indignant interested ecclesiastics should unite to accomplish the ruin of the man who exposed their ambition, tyranny, and avarice. For this very purpose, we are told, the wicked clergy of Bohemia and Moravia, and especially the bishops and abbots, combined together; and even contributed sums of money to be employed in procuring the condemnation and death of Huss; and all this, because they could not bear his faithful honest advice and admonition, and because he detected their abominable pride, simony, avarice, and debauchery."

3. That some persons of the greatest weight in the council were actually influenced by these motives, is not a matter of mere

* Gal. xi. 30.

† Zech. iv. 6

• Lenfant. Mosheim. Diaz. Husse.

conjecture. Lenfant has given us the very words, in Latin, spoken by the emperor to the council, after the examination of Huss.

The translation of them is as follows :

" You have heard the articles laid to the charge of John Huss. They are grievous, numerous, and proved not only by credible witnesses, but by his own confession. In my opinion, there's not a single one among them which does not call for the punishment of fire. If therefore he do not retract all, I am for having him burnt. And even though he should obey the council, I am of opinion, that he should be forbid to preach and instruct, or ever to set foot again in the kingdom of Bohemia. For if he be suffered to preach, and especially in Bohemia where he has a strong party, he will not fail to return to his natural bent, and even to sow new errors worse than the former. Moreover, I am of opinion, that the condemnation of his errors in Bohemia, ought to be sent to my brother the king of Bohemia, to Poland, and to other countries where this doctrine prevails, with orders to cause all those who shall continue to believe and teach it, to be punished by the ecclesiastical authority and by the secular arm jointly. There is no remedy for this evil, but by thus cutting the branches as well as pulling up the root. Moreover it is absolutely necessary that the bishops and other prelates, who have laboured here for the extirpation of this heresy, be recommended by the suffrages of the whole council to their sovereigns. Lastly, says the emperor, if there are any of John Huss's friends here at Constance, they ought to be restrained with all due severity, but especially his disciple Jerom." Whereupon some said that Jerom of Prague might perhaps be brought to reason by the punishment of his MASTER.

This lays open the true reason of that treatment, p. 640, which Huss was to have experienced in case he had retracted. The council dreaded his return in Bohemia. Even in the iniquitous sentence which they passed against him, they had the incautious effrontery to declare John Huss not a true preacher of the gospel of Christ according to the exposition of holy doctors, but rather one who in his public discourses seduced the christian people of Bohemia BY HIS COMPILATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES.*

4. It is a lamentable truth that, in those days, the disputes concerning the most abstract metaphysical subtilties were carried to such a height by the contending parties as to produce the greatest bitterness and animosity. Huss was attached to the party of the REALISTS as they were then called ; and opposed with great warmth his adversaries the NOMINALISTS. This circumstance is supposed

to have contributed not a little to the unhappy fate of this pious Bohemian. For the tribunal at Constance was principally composed of Nominalists, with the famous John Gerson at their head, who was the zealous patron of the faction, and the mortal enemy of Huss. In the report which the popish writers sent to the king of France respecting the transactions at Constance, there is the following passage, " God raised up the Catholic doctors Peter Allyaco and John Gerson, and many other learned NOMINALISTS, who disputed, during forty days, at the council of Constance, with the heretics Jerom and John Huss, and vanquished them."[†]

Happy would it have been if these opposite sects of philosophers had confined themselves within the bounds of reason and argument, or even of mutual invectives ; but they were accustomed to accuse each others of heresy and impiety, and had constantly recourse to penal laws and corporal punishments. Thus the leading NOMINALISTS at Constance looked on themselves as personally offended with Huss, and would be satisfied with nothing short of the death of their powerful adversary. On the other hand, in 1479, the Realists had sufficient weight and influence to procure the condemnation of John de Wesalia, a Nominalist, of whose sufferings we shall presently give a brief account.

It is needless to detain the reader with a minute detail of the distinctions between the Realists and Nominalists. Their principal point of contention seems to have been the existence or non-existence of abstract or universal ideas. Strange infatuation ! That a difference of opinion in such abstruse and obscure subjects as these should ever have been supposed to amount to the sin against the Holy Ghost, or to a mortal offence against God, the christian religion, justice, and the commonwealth. " Can this blindness proceed from any other cause than the influence of Satan, who diverts us from good things and makes us apply to vain speculations, which neither inspire us with a devotion towards God, nor with love and charity towards our neighbour."——Such is the fine reflection of the anonymous author of the examination of John de Wesalia.*

The angry disputations of these discordant sects continued till the appearance of Luther, who, by introducing more important subjects, soon put an end to the mutual wranglings of the scholastic divines.

There is a tradition, that John Huss, alluding to his own name which signifies a Goose, predicted before his judges the reformation by Luther in the following terms. " This day ye roast a Goose, but a hundred

* Vid. Fascicul. rer. Sententia defin. contra Huss. p. 392.

† Baluz. Miscell. Tom. IV. p. 594.
* Fascicul. rer. exp.

years hence a white Swan will come which ye will never be able to put to death." This pretended prophecy, like many others, was probably made after the event.

Lenfant mentions several medals which appear to have been struck for the purpose of commemorating the virtues of Huss. Two were preserved at Magdeburg, which have on one side the image of John Huss with his beard and mitre, with a book in his right hand, which Luther in a priest's habit, bare-headed and clasping the bible with both hands, looks on with pleasure. A third was in the private cabinet of a German count. On one side it represents Huss,—with these words, *Sola Deo acceptus nos facit esse fides*; Faith alone renders us acceptable to God;—and on the other side Luther with these words, *Pestis eram, virus; meritis ero mors tua, Papa*; I was a plague to thee, O pope, whilst living, and will be thy death when I die.

The encomium passed by the same very impartial historian, on the private letters of Huss, is well worthy of notice.

"There is not a Papist nor a Protestant, I will venture to say, not a Turk, nor a Pagan, who notwithstanding the hasty expressions dropped now and then in his letters, does not admire them for the dignity and piety of his sentiments, the tenderness of his conscience, his charity towards his enemies, his affection and fidelity to his friends, his gratitude to his benefactors, and above all his constancy of mind, accompanied with the most extraordinary modesty and humility."

After all, a very learned and profound ecclesiastical historian admits that these did appear in the conduct of HUSS, ONE MARK OF HERESY, which, according to the maxims of the age, might expose him to condemnation with some appearance of justice; namely, HIS INFLEXIBLE OBSTINACY; which the church of Rome always considered as a grievous heresy, even in those whose errors were of little moment." Huss refused to abjure his errors; and in so doing he resisted that council which was supposed to represent the catholic church. Moreover he intimated with sufficient plainness that the church was fallible. All this was, certainly, highly criminal and intolerably heretical. For it became a dutiful son of the church to submit, without any exception, his own judgment to the judgment of his holy mother, and to believe firmly in her infallibility. The Roman church for many years had observed the rule of Pliny; "In case of obstinate perseverance, I ordered them to be executed." For of this I had no doubt, that a sullen and obstinate inflexibility called for the vengeance of the magistrates."—The dis-

cerning reader will determine for himself, how far Dr. Mosheim, in making these observations, is to be considered as speaking ironically.

CHAPTER III.

THE HUSSITES TELL THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION.

WE have seen with what indignation the Bohemians heard of the murder of John Huss and Jerom of Prague. To this cause historians ascribe the commencement of the Hussite war, which was carried on by the enraged Bohemians for three years under the famous Zisca, and for ten years after his death.

The historian of the church of Christ withdraws from a scene, crowded with almost incredible victories over the emperor, and with inhuman cruelties on both sides.—The main body of the discontented Bohemians were at length satisfied with the liberty of the cup in the sacrament, and with the administration of the ordinance in their own language. These points, after the effusion of a deluge of blood, were given up by the papal party in the year 1433, and a treaty of peace was made, of which these formed the basis. In other respects, the Calistines re-assembled the papists, by whose artifices they were induced even to persecute the genuine followers of Huss. These last mentioned, the true Hussites, besides the scriptural celebration of the sacrament, desired to see a real reformation of the church, and the establishment of purity of doctrine and discipline. But, after a long series of military confusion, they found themselves still a persecuted body of men; and those of them, who had been inclined to have recourse to the sword, were gradually convinced, that patient faith and perseverance in prayer are the proper arms of a christian soldier. Never indeed was there a more striking instance of the inefficacy of carnal weapons in defending the church of Christ. The Bohemians had carried on war for thirteen years, often with great success, and always with undaunted courage and fortitude; and in the end, they gained only two privileges, merely of an external nature in the administration of the Lord's supper. With these the majority of the people remained content, and still adhered to the papal abominations, while the real christians were exposed as much as ever to the persecutions of the church of Rome, and were not only abandoned, but also cruelly treated by their brethren.

In the mean time the council of Basil succeeded that of Constance. But the reader who has with me examined the motives which appear to have influenced the last men-

tioned council will not perhaps be disposed to take the same pains with that of Basil, which was conducted on a similar plan of secular intrigue and ambition. Among its other objects, the reduction of Bohemia to the papal system was not forgotten; and Rokyzan, a Calixtine, was allured, by the hopes of the archbishopric of Prague, to second the views of the papal party. He was elected archbishop in 1436, and laboured to induce the Bohemians to be content without the cup, and in all other things to conform to the Romish doctrine and worship.

The genuine followers of Huss, were, however, not without hopes of engaging him to promote a more complete reformation. His sister's son, Gregory, who was in a great measure the founder of the unity of the Hussite brethren, solicited him in the most pressing manner to promote vital godliness. But Rokyzan, though he had light enough to approve of the pious intentions of his nephew, could not, through fear of losing his archiepiscopal dignity, be prevailed on to oppose the Romish corruptions; yet, he advised the Hussites, to edify one another in private, and gave them some good books for that purpose. He also obtained for them, permission to withdraw to the lordship of Lititz, on the confines of Silesia and Moravia, and there to regulate their plan of worship according to their own consciences.

About the year 1453, a number of Hussites repaired to Lititz; and chose Michael Bradazius for their minister. He with some assistants, under the direction of Gregory, held a conference in 1457, in which the plan of the Hussite church, or that of the united brethren was formed, idolatrous rites were prohibited, and a strictness of discipline, resembling that of the primitive christian church, was instituted. Discipline indeed, was a favourite object of this people; and if their attention to this subordinate circumstance had been connected with what is of much greater moment,—an accurate and luminous system of christian doctrine,—far more salutary consequences would have ensued.—In this the Hussites were certainly defective, though by no means fundamentally so; and hence, while they were pursuing a matter of inferior importance, they failed to promote the spirit of godliness in so great a degree as they had expected. The inward life and vigour of their church corresponded not with the purity of its external system, nor could distressed consciences find among them that comfort and liberty which are so necessary to propagate godliness to any great extent. In one point, however, they proved themselves the genuine followers of Christ; they determined to make use of no carnal weapons for the defence of religion; and no more to suffer the name of Hussites to be disgraced by such

unchristian methods, as it formerly had been.

They were soon called to the exercise of that passive courage, which they professed. The increase of their congregations in Bohemia and Moravia, was beheld with suspicion both by Romish and Calixtine priests, and they were accused of an intention to renew the Taborite tumults and to seize the government. Those professors of godliness, who have been so far misled by false zeal, or the love of the world, as to take the sword in defence of religion, little know the injury which they do to the cause which they undertake to support. Profane minds are always malicious, and will be ever apt to charge all who profess the same truths, with the same seditious spirit, of which they have once seen some instances. The Hussites, therefore, loaded with the infamy of their predecessors, had now no remedy. Even George Podiebrad, who was elected king of Bohemia in 1458, and who had hitherto protected them, now consented to persecute the united brethren.

They had hoped for support in Rokyzan, whose ministry had formerly been useful to their souls. With a degree of evangelical light, this man still followed the world, and lived in miserable grandeur, dearly purchased at the expense of a good conscience. The following is an extract of a letter, which the brethren wrote to him while they laboured under the imputations of promoting needless divisions. It will give the reader some idea of their principles and spirit. "Your sermons have been highly grateful and pleasant to us. You earnestly exhorted us to flee from the horrible errors of antichrist, revealed in these last days. You taught us that the devil introduced the abuses of the sacraments, and that men placed a false hope of salvation in them. You confirmed to us, from the writings of the apostles and from the examples of the primitive church, the true doctrine of those divine institutions. Being distressed in our consciences, and distracted by the variety of opinions, which prevailed in the church, we were induced to follow your advice, which was to attend the ministry of Peter Chelezitius, whose discourses and writings gave us a clearer insight into christian truths, inasmuch that when we saw that your life and practice were at variance with your doctrine, we were constrained to entertain doubts concerning your religious character. When we conversed with you on this occasion your answer was to this effect, "I know that your sentiments are true; but if I should patronize your cause, I must incur the same infamy and disgrace which you do." Whence

Joachim Camerarius de Ecclesiis in Bohemia et Moravia, p. 61. I have consulted this treatise, and made use of it as my guide in this chapter, in connection with Crantz's history of the brethren, published by Le Trapp.

we understood, that you would desert us, rather than relinquish the honours of the world. Having now no refuge but in God, we implored him to make known to us the mystery of his will. As a gracious Father, he hath looked upon our afflictions, and hath heard our prayers. Trusting in our God, we have assembled ourselves in the unity of the faith by which we have been justified through Jesus Christ, and of which we were made partakers in conformity to the image of his death, that we might be the heirs of eternal life. Do not imagine, that we have separated ourselves from you on account of certain rites and ceremonies instituted by men; but on account of evil and corrupt doctrine. For if we could, in connexion with you, have preserved the true faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, we never should have made this separation."

Thus does it appear that the Hussite brethren were not mere schismatics, but properly reformed protestants, who separated from the church of Rome on account of the essentials of godliness, and because, in that church, they could not preserve the genuine faith of the gospel, and purity of worship. And the constancy with which they endured persecution, shewed, that they had not received, the grace of God in vain. For now they were declared unworthy of the common rights of subjects; and, in the depth of winter, were driven out of the cities and villages, with the forfeiture of all their effects. The sick were thrown into the open fields, where many perished with cold and hunger. Various sorts of torture were inflicted on the brethren: numbers were barbarously murdered; and many died in the prisons.

During these melancholy scenes, Gregory, the nephew of Rokyzan, was distinguished by his zeal, fortitude, and charity. To these virtues he added prudence and discretion, of which he gave a remarkable instance.* The governor of Prague apprehending danger to the brethren to be at hand, had the kindness to warn Gregory to withdraw from Prague, which he did accordingly.† Some of the brethren were disgusted at this conduct, and boasted, that the rack was their breakfast, and the flames their dinner. Part, however, of these men failed on the trial, and recanted, to save their lives; though of the lapsed, some bemoaned their fall, and recovered by repentance. Gregory himself, on another occasion, underwent with patience the tortures of the rack. In the extremity of his suffering he fell into a swoon, and was believed to have expired.‡

* It is not easy to give a regular account of these transactions according to the order of time. There is, I find, some diversity in this respect, between the two authors whom I follow. But I retain the substance of the narrative, collected from both.

† Joachin Camer. p. 85.

‡ Camerarius, p. 80.

His uncle Rokyzan hasted to the prison at the news, and lamented over him in these words, "My dear Gregory, I would to God I were where thou art." So strong was the power of conscience still in this unhappy archbishop! But Gregory recovered, and was preserved by providence to be a nursing father to the church to a very advanced age.

The brethren, bearing of the sensibility discovered by Rokyzan, addressed themselves to him again; but his answers were of the same kind as formerly. He was determined not to suffer persecution; and they, in their farewell letter, said to him, with more zeal than discretion, "Thou art of the world, and wilt perish with the world." The persecution now took a different turn; the Hussites were no longer tortured, but were driven out of the country; whence they were obliged to hide themselves in mountains and woods, and to live in the wilderness. In this situation in the year 1467 they came to a resolution to form a church among themselves, and to appoint their own ministers. In 1480 they received a great increase of their numbers from the accession of Waldensian refugees, who escaped out of Austria, where Stephen, the last bishop of the Waldenses in that province, was burnt alive, and where the vehemence of persecution no longer allowed this people to live in security. An union was easily formed between the Waldenses and the Hussites, on account of the similarity of their sentiments and manners. The refugees, however, found their situation but little meliorated by a junction with a people, who were obliged to conceal themselves in thickets and in clefts of rocks; and who, to escape detection by the smoke, made no fires except in the night, when they read the word of God and prayed. What they must have suffered in these circumstances, may be easily conceived. The death of king Podiebrad, in 1471, had afforded them, indeed, some relief; and about the same time had died also the unhappy Rokyzan, who, in his latter days, promoted the persecutions against them, and who expired in despair.

In 1481 the Hussites were banished Moravia; but returned into that country six years afterwards. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, they counted two hundred congregations in Bohemia and Moravia. Their most violent persecutors were the Calixtines, who certainly for the most part resembled the papists in all things except in the particularity from which their name was derived.

And here I close, for the present, the history of the Hussites, who doubtless as a body of men feared God and served him in the gospel of his Son. They also maintained a degree of discipline among themselves vastly superior to that of any others of the christian

name, unless we except the churches of the Waldenses. Both of these however were defective in evangelical LIGHT. There wanted an exhibition of the pure doctrines of Christ, luminous, attractive, and powerful, which should publish peace and salvation to mankind through the cross of Christ, and engage the attention of the serious and thoughtful, who knew not the way of peace. These could find little instruction or consolation in the view of a society of well disciplined christians, whose manners indeed were pure and holy, but in the eyes of the ignorant forbidding and austere. God in his mercy was now hastening this exhibition by the light of the reformation, which, after we have very briefly surveyed the fifteenth century in GENERAL, must engage our attention.

CHAPTER IV.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THE most remarkable events, which distinguish this period in general history, appear to have been directed by Divine Providence with a particular subserviency to the reformation. Only in this view they will deserve the notice of the historian of the church of Christ. In the year 1453 Constantinople was taken by the Turkish emperor Mahomet II. From the year 1299 when the four angels were loosed, which had been bound in the river Euphrates,¹ that is to say, when four Turkish sultanies were established in the east, the Turks had gradually increased their power, and filled the world with carnage and confusion. In the mean time the princes of Europe, absorbed in the vortex of narrow and contracted politics, indolently beheld these ferocious barbarians advancing further and further to the west, and formed no generous plan of defensive combination. It was in vain that the distressed emperors of the east implored the aid of the western princes. The common enemy OVERFLOWED AND PASSED OVER,—to use the prophetic language of Daniel,—and having once gained a footing in Europe, he continued to domineer over a large part of Christendom, and to desolate the nations. The same unerring spirit of prophecy which foretold these amazing scenes by St. John, foretold also the continued obduracy and impenitence of the nominal christians. They repented not of their idolatry and practical wickedness.²

There cannot be a more melancholy contemplation, than to observe the infatuation of nations, who have provoked God to

forsake them. Though the voice of providence is addressed to their senses, they consider not the works of the Lord, and at the same time seem to be as destitute of political sagacity, as they are of religious principle. This fifteenth century affords an awful instance of these things. The Turks oppressed Europe with persevering cruelty; but Europe neither humbled itself before God, nor took any measures to check the ambition of the Mahometans. The sovereign of the universe, however, was bringing order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. The learned men, who emigrated from Greece, revived the study of letters in Europe, and paved the way for that light of classical erudition, which was one of the most powerful of all those subordinate means, which were employed in the demolition of idolatry and superstition. By a surprising concurrence of circumstances, the noble art of printing was invented about the year 1440.³ Learning was cultivated with incredible ardour: the family of the Medici was raised up to patronize science; and toward the end of this same century, Erasmus arose, whose good sense, taste and industry, were uncommonly serviceable to the reformation. By his labours, monastic superstition received a wound which has never since been healed; and learned men were furnished with critical skill and ingenuity, of which they failed not to avail themselves in the instruction of mankind to a degree beyond what Erasmus himself had ever conceived.

Thus, under the care of divine providence, materials were collected, for that beautiful edifice, which began to be erected in the next century. In the fifteenth century the great value and benefit of these materials scarcely appeared; the same corruptions both of faith and of practice, which have so often been described, still prevailed in all their horrors.

In the mean time there were some individuals, who, though not connected with any particular christian societies, evidenced the power of godliness. Among these, Thomas Rhedon, a Frenchman and a Carmelite friar, was distinguished.⁴ This man came to Rome with the Venetian ambassadors, having undertaken this journey in the hope of improving his understanding in religious concerns. He had hitherto no conception of the enormous corruptions of that venal city, and was therefore astonished to find that even the habitation of St. Peter was become a den of thieves. His zealous spirit was stirred up in him, to give an open testimony to evangelical truth; and at length by continual preaching he incurred the hatred of the ruling powers. In fine, he was degraded from the priesthood, and was burnt four

¹ Mosheim, vol. I. p. 764.

² Fox, vol. I. p. 758.

³ Rev. ix. 1.

⁴ Rev. ix. 21.

years after his arrival at Rome, in the year 1496, during the pontificate of Eugenius, the successor of that same Martin who was raised to the papedom by the council of Constance. Several others, who like him were enlightened, and like him were faithful to their God, though unconnected with any particular church, were executed in Germany, not long after the burning of John Huss.

Jerom Savanarola, an Italian monk, by his zeal, learning, and piety, incurred in an eminent manner the hatred of the court of Rome. Notwithstanding the repeated menaces of the pope, he continued to preach the word of God with great vehemence, and with a degree of light and knowledge, which seems superior to that of most, if not of all men, in that age. In 1496 he upheld the standard of the gospel at Florence, though many warned him of the danger, to which he was exposed by his great boldness. At length, in the year 1498,¹ he and two other friars, named Dominic and Silvester, were imprisoned. During his confinement, he wrote a spiritual meditation on the thirty-first psalm, in which he described the conflict between the flesh and the spirit,—a subject peculiarly evangelical, and which needs some real exercise of practical godliness, in order to be duly understood and relished by mankind. The pope's legates arriving at Florence, Jerom and his two companions were charged with maintaining various heretical opinions,—one of which will deserve to be distinctly mentioned as characteristic of the times in which they lived. For example, they were accused in explicit terms of having preached the doctrine of free justification through faith in Christ; and after they had persevered in what was called an obstinate heresy, they were degraded, delivered to the secular power at Florence, and burnt to death in the year 1499.

There were also some souls, who, in secret, served God in the gospel of his Son; and who knew what spirituality in religion meant, though from some particular circumstances they never were exposed to suffer in any considerable degree for righteousness' sake. Among these was the famous Thomas a Kempis, who died in 1471.² Instead of entering into the tedious dispute concerning the author of the well-known book of the imitation of Jesus Christ, let us be content with ascribing it to this monk, its reputed author. It would be impertinent in me to enter into any detail of a performance, so familiar to religious readers: and let it suffice to say, that it abounds with the most pious and devotional sentiments, and could not have been written but by one well versed in christian experience, though it par-

takes of the common defect of monastic writers; that is to say, it does not sufficiently illustrate the doctrine of justification by faith.

Vincent Ferrer, though bred in the midst of darkness, and connected with the worst of ecclesiastical characters, was a shining model of piety.¹ He was born at Valencia in Spain, became a Dominican friar, and what was far better, a zealous preacher of the word of God. A quotation from his book on spiritual life will deserve the attention of students. "Do you desire to study to advantage? Consult God more than books, and ask him humbly to make you understand what you read. Study drains the mind and heart. Go from time to time to be refreshed at the feet of Christ under his cross. Some moments of repose there, give fresh vigour and new light: interrupt your study by short, but fervent ejaculations. Science is the gift of the Father of lights. Do not consider it as attainable merely by the work of your own mind or industry." This holy person was retained in the service of Peter de Luna, who, as pope, took the name of Benedict XIII., and was one of those three popes, that were deposed by the council of Constance. Very few men are represented in history to have been of a more proud and despicable character than Peter de Luna. Vincent intreated his master to resign his dignity. Benedict rather artfully eluded than directly refused the request. Bishopsrics and a cardinal's hat were then offered to Vincent; but his heart was insensible to the charms of worldly honours and dignities. He very earnestly wished to become an apostolic missionary; and, in this respect, he was at length gratified by Benedict. At the age of forty-two he began to preach with great fervour in every town from Avignon towards Valencia. His word is said to have been powerful among the Jews, the Mahometans, and others. After he had laboured in Spain, France, and Italy, he then, at the desire of Henry IV. king of England, exerted himself in the same manner throughout the chief towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Still finding Peter de Luna entirely obstinate in his ambition, he renounced his service, and, by the desire of king Henry V., made Normandy, and Brittany, the theatre of his labours during the last two years of his life.—He died at the age of sixty-two.

How truly humble this man was, appears from the whole of this little account which I can collect concerning him; and particularly, from his own confession; "my whole life is a sink of iniquity: I am all infection: I am corruption throughout. I feel this to be so, more and more. Whe-

¹ Fox, p. 830.

² Du Pin.

¹ Butler, Vol. IV.

ver is proud, shall stand without. Christ manifests his truth to the lowly, and hides himself from the proud."

Antoninus, archbishop of Florence, born in the year 1389, seems to have been a similar character.^m Great things are related of his pastoral labours and services. His secretary, observing his indefatigable exertions, once said to him, "The life of a bishop is truly pitiable, if he is doomed to live in such a constant hurry as you live." "To enjoy inward peace," replied he, "we must, amidst all our affairs, ever reserve a closet as it were in our hearts, where we are to remain retired within ourselves, and where no worldly business can enter." He died, aged seventy; and is said to have frequently repeated, in his last moments, words which he had been accustomed to use in the time of his health; namely,—
"To serve God is to reign."

Let Barnardineⁿ of the republic of Sienna, close this concise review of the fifteenth century. He was born in the year 1380, and on account of his uncommon zeal in preaching, was called "the burning coal." He gave this advice to clergymen, "Seek first the kingdom of God; and the Holy Ghost will give you a wisdom, which no adversary can withstand." This excellent man expressed an earnest wish to be able to cry out with a trumpet through the world, "How long will ye love simplicity?"—He died, aged sixty-three years.

John de Wesalia was a doctor of divinity of the fifteenth century.

1. He taught doctrines which much displeased the catholics.

2. The archbishop of Mentz prosecuted him. John was imprisoned, and an assembly of popish doctors were convened to sit in judgment upon him in 1479.

3. He made a public recantation of his doctrines; but nevertheless was condemned to a perpetual penance in a monastery of the Augustine friars, where he died soon after.

The Protestants have certainly ranked him in the catalogue of the witnesses to the truth;—but there may be a question whether his principles and his practice, taken together, entitle him to a place in this history. Very little is known concerning him, except from his examination before the German inquisitors, who most undoubtedly treated him with great harshness and severity.

By one author he appears to have been considered as an eminent christian; but this is the judgment of a person who shows himself on all occasions extremely attached to Calvinistic tenets, and who has no mercy on Arminians. And, if for the sake of brevity, I may be allowed the use of the words Calvinist and Arminian, as being terms well un-

^m Butler, Vol. V. ⁿ Id.

derstood at this day, John de Wesalia was certainly a most rigid Calvinist.

A long catalogue of charges were brought against him, from which it may be proper to select a few for the reader's perusal.

1. From everlasting, God hath written a book wherein he hath inscribed all his elect; and whosoever is not already written there, will never be written there at all. Moreover,
2. He that is written therein will never be blotted out.

3. The elect are saved by the grace of God alone; and what man soever God willeth to save, by enduing him with grace, if all the priests in the world were desirous to damn and excommunicate that man, he would still be saved. Whomsoever likewise God willeth to damn, he would still be damned, though the presbyters, the pope and others were willing to save him.

4. If there had never been any pope in the world, they who are saved, would have been saved. The pope, and bishops and priests contribute nothing to salvation; concord alone, and peace among men, and a peaceable way of living are sufficient.

5. Christ never appointed any particular fasts, nor forbade the use of flesh meat on any day.

6. If St. Peter appointed fasts, perhaps he did so for the purpose of having a better sale for his fish.

7. The holy oil is the very same as the oil which you eat at home.

8. The scriptures do not say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.

9. Those who undertake pilgrimages to Rome are fools.

10. I consider nothing as sinful, which the scriptures have not declared to be so.

11. I despise the pope and his councils. I love Christ; and may his word dwell in us abundantly!

12. It is a difficult thing to be a christian.

13. Indulgences are nothing.

It was further objected to him in the course of his examination, that he had given it as his opinion, that St. Paul contributed nothing towards his conversion by his own free-will.

This account might lead us to suspect, that there was something of a spirit of levity in the disposition of John de Wesalia. He seems to have seen clearly through several of the popish superstitions, and to have exposed them with zeal and freedom. Charity will certainly incline us to hope the best; nevertheless the christian reader cannot but wish there had been greater marks of personal contrition of soul and of true humility at the cross of Christ. However, it ought not to be omitted, that John was an old man and bowed down with infirmities and disorders of long standing; and therefore he was probably not able to recollect what he had former-

ly advanced, or to express his thoughts distinctly before such a formidable tribunal of Inquisitors.—Fear compelled him at last to retract; but in the course of his trial, he had the spirit to say to the court, “If Christ

were now present, and ye were to treat him as ye do me, HE might be condemned by you as a heretic. However,”—the old man added with a smile,—“HE would get the better of you by his acuteness.”^o

CENTURY XVI.

CHAPTER I.

THE REFORMATION UNDER THE CONDUCT OF LUTHER.

PRELIMINARIES.

THE sixteenth century opened with a prospect of all others the most gloomy, in the eyes of every true Christian. Corruption both in doctrine and in practice had exceeded all bounds; and the general face of Europe, though the name of Christ was every where professed, presented nothing that was properly evangelical. Great efforts indeed had been made to emancipate the church from the “powers of darkness;” and in consequence many individual souls had been conducted into the path of salvation. Still nothing like a general reformation had taken place in any part of Europe. For it must be confessed, that the labours of Claudius of Turin, of the Waldensian Barbs, of Wickliff, and of Huss, had not been sufficiently directed against the predominant corruptions in doctrine, though the practical abuses of the popedom had been opposed with ingenuous freedom and disinterested courage. The external branches only, rather than the bitter root itself, which supported all the evils of false religion, being attacked, no permanent or extensive change had ensued. The Waldenses were too feeble to molest the popedom; and the Hussites, divided among themselves, and worn out by a long series of contentions, were reduced to silence. Among both were found persons of undoubted godliness, but they appeared incapable of making effectual impressions on the kingdom of antichrist. The Roman pontiffs were still the uncontrolled patrons of impiety: neither the scandalous crimes of Alexander VI., nor the military ferocity of Julius II.,—pontiffs whose actions it is impertinent to the plan of this history to detail, seem to have lessened the dominion of the court of Rome, or to have opened the eyes of men so as to induce them to make a so-

ber investigation of the nature of true religion.

But not many years after the commencement of this century, the world beheld an attempt to restore the light of the gospel, more evangelically judicious, more simply founded on the word of God, and more ably and more successfully conducted than any which had ever been seen since the days of Augustine. Martin Luther, whom divine providence raised up for this purpose, was evidently the instrument rather than the agent of this reformation. He was led from step to step, by a series of circumstances, far beyond his original intentions; and in a manner, which might evince the excellency of the power to be of God and not of man.^p Even the reformations, which took place in several other parts of Europe, besides Germany, the scene of Luther's transactions, were in a great measure derived from the light, which he was enabled to diffuse among mankind. And as the peculiar excellency of the revival of godliness now before us lay in this, that it was conversant in fundamentals of doctrine, rather than in correction of mere abuses of practice, hence the history of Lutheranism recommends itself in an especial manner to the study of every theologian.

That I may be able to furnish the reader with a clear and satisfactory view of this important part of ecclesiastical history, I shall particularly avail myself of the labours of the learned Seckendorf, who published a Latin translation of Maimbourg's history, and who, in a diffusive comment, often corrected and refuted it, and at the same time supplied from the very best materials whatever might be wanted to illustrate the progress of Lutheranism. The authentic documents derived from the archives of the royal house of Saxe Gotha, and the original papers of Luther, Melancthon, and other reformers are largely quoted by this author. He adverts also continually to the opposite accounts of

^o Facio. rer. vol. i. & Bayle, Crit. Diet.

^p 2 Cor. iv. 7.

^q Louis Maimbourg, a learned Jesuit, wrote celebrated histories of Calvinism, Lutheranism, Arianism, &c. &c.

the Romish writers. In fine, he seems to have examined all the best sources of information on this subject, and to have placed before his readers, whatever might be needful to inform their judgments. I follow Seckendorf therefore as my principal guide, yet not exclusively; I also make use of father Paul, of Du Pin, of Sleidan, Thuanus, &c. &c. The merely modern writers, who too commonly treat these interesting matters in a superficial manner, content with elegance of style, and an indulgence to the popular taste, afford little service towards the execution of my plan.

In a manuscript history, extending from the year 1524 to 1541, composed by Frederic Myconius, a very able coadjutor of Luther and Melancthon, the author describes the state of religion in the beginning of this century in striking terms. "The passion and satisfaction of Christ, were treated as a bare history, like the *Odyssey* of Homer: Concerning faith, by which the righteousness of the Redeemer and eternal life are apprehended, there was the deepest silence: Christ was described as a severe judge, ready to condemn all who were destitute of the intercession of saints and of pontifical interest. In the room of Christ, were substituted as saviours and intercessors, the virgin Mary, like a pagan Diana, and other saints, who from time to time had been created by the popes. Nor were men, it seems, entitled to the benefit of their prayers except they deserved it of them by their works. What sort of works was necessary for this end was distinctly explained; not the works prescribed in the decalogue, and enjoined on all mankind, but such as enriched the priests and monks. Those, who died neglecting these, were consigned to hell, or at least to purgatory, till they were redeemed from it by a satisfaction made either by themselves or by their proxies. The frequent pronunciation of the Lord's prayer and the salutation of the Virgin, and the recitations of the canonical hours, constantly engaged those who undertook to be religious. An incredible mass of ceremonious observances was every where visible; while gross wickedness was practised, under the encouragement of indulgences, by which the guilt of the crimes was easily expiated. The preaching of the word was the least part of the episcopal function: rites and processions employed the bishops perpetually, when engaged in religious exercises. The number of clergy was enormous, and their lives were most scandalous. I speak of those whom I have known in the town of Gothen," &c. If we add to this the testimony of Pellicanus, another of Luther's followers, "that a Greek Testament could not be procur-

ed at any price in all Germany,"* what can be wanting to complete the picture of that darkness in which men lived, and in what did the Christian nations differ from Pagans, except in the name? It may be proper to mention, that even the university of Paris, the first of all the famous schools of learning, could not furnish a single person capable of supporting a controversy against Luther on the foundation of scripture. And scarcely any christian doctor in the beginning of this century had a critical knowledge of the word of God. The reader may find it useful to be detained a little longer in contemplating the situation of the christian world at the time of Luther's appearance. The observations I have to offer for this purpose shall be arranged under four distinct heads; and they will, I trust, assist us in demonstrating the importance of the reformation, and fully evince that the difference between popery and protestantism is not merely verbal.

1. The popish doctrine of indulgences was then in the highest reputation. We shall be in no danger of misrepresenting this doctrine, if we state it according to the ideas of one of the ablest champions of popery.[†] The church, he tells us, imposes painful works or sufferings on offenders; which, being discharged or undergone with humility, are called satisfactions; and when regarding the fervour of the penitents or other good works, she remits some part of the task, this is called "an indulgence." For he pretends that the infinite satisfaction of Christ may be applied in two ways, either by entire remission, without the reservation of any punishment, or by the changing of a greater punishment into a less. "The first, he says, is done in baptism, the second in the case of sins committed after baptism." And here he gives us the authority of the council of Trent, to support his assertion, namely, "The power to grant indulgences has been committed to the church by Jesus Christ, and the use of them is beneficial to salvation." Those, he observes, who depart this life indebted to divine justice for some of the pains reserved, must suffer them in another life in the state of purgatory.

Reliefs are however provided in this case also; the benefit of indulgences extends, it seems, beyond the grave, and the doctrine of commutation for offences, applied in real practice by the friends of the deceased, was held to be valid in heaven. The foundation of all this system was generally believed to be this: There was supposed to be an infinite treasure of merit in Christ and the saints; which was abundantly more than

* Page 132. Id.

† Bossuet bishop of Meaux, in an exposition of the doctrine of the Catholic church in matters of controversy.

† Seckendorf, vol. i. p. 4.

sufficient for themselves; thus, what is strictly true of the Divine Saviour, was asserted also of saints, namely, that they had done works of supererogation. This treasure was deposited in the church, under the conduct of the See of Rome, and was sold,—for literally sold it was for money,—at that See's discretion to those who were able and willing to pay for it; and few were found willing to undergo the course of a severe penance of unpleasant austerities, when they could afford to commute for it by pecuniary payments. The popes, and under them the bishops and the clergy, particularly the Dominican and Franciscan friars, had the disposition of this treasure; and as the pontiffs had the power of canonizing new saints at their own will, the fund was ever growing; and so long as the system could maintain its credit, the riches of their church, thus secularized under the appearance of religion, became a sea without a shore. No impartial examiner of authentic records will say, that I have overcharged this account of indulgences. In fact, these were the symptoms of the last stage of papal depravity; and as the moral evils, which they encouraged, were plain to every one not totally destitute of discernment, they were the first objects, assailed by the reformers.

2. But the views of those wise and holy personages were far more extensive. They saw, that a practice so scandalously corrupt, was connected with the grossest ignorance of the nature of gospel-grace. The doctrine of justification, in its explicit form, had been lost for many ages to the Christian world. If men had really believed, that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ salvation was obtained, and that God "justifies the ungodly" through faith alone, how could they have been imposed on by the traffic of indulgences? In whatever manner the papist might subtilize and divide, he was compelled by his system to hold, that by a compliance with the rules of the church, either in the way of indulgences, or by some severer mode, pardon was to be obtained; and that the satisfaction of Christ was not sufficiently meritorious for this end; in other words, that the gift of God is not eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.* And in fact the preachers of indulgences, whether popes themselves or their ministers, held out to the people with sufficient clearness, that the inheritance of eternal life was to be purchased by indulgences. Proofs of this have already appeared in the course of this history, and more will be given hereafter. The testimony of Sleidan, one of the most judicious and dispassionate historians, to the nature of indulgences, well deserves to be transcribed in this place. It is contained in the beginning of his excellent

history. "Pope Léo X. making use of that power, which his predecessors had usurped over all christian churches, sent abroad into all kingdoms his letters and bulls, with ample promises of the full pardon of sins, and of eternal salvation to such as would purchase the same with money!!!" Even when the traffic of indulgences was checked by the pontiffs, as being carried on in too gross a manner, no clear account was given in what the abuse consisted. In fine, it was evident, that no reformation could take place through the medium of qualifying and correcting abuses of this traffic. The system itself was wholly impious, and the right knowledge of justification was the only remedy adequate to the evil. This, therefore, the reader is to look for, as the most capital object of the reformation; and thus, in the demolition of one of the vilest perversions of superstition, there suddenly arose and revived, in all its infant simplicity, that apocryphal doctrine, in which is contained the great mystery of the scriptures.

3. The state of mankind at that time was peculiarly adapted to the reception of so rich a display of gospel-grace. God sent a plentiful rain, whereby he did confirm his inheritance, when it was weary." Men were then bound fast in fetters of iron: their whole religion was one enormous mass of bondage. Terrors beset them on every side; and the fiction of purgatory was ever teeming with ghosts and apparitions. Persons truly serious,—and such there ever were and will be, because there ever was and will be a true church on earth,—were so clouded in their understandings by the prevailing corruptions of the hierarchy, that they could find no access to God by Jesus Christ. The road of simple faith, grounded on the divine promises, connected always with real humility, and always productive of hearty and grateful obedience, was stopped up with briars and thorns. No certain rest could be afforded to the weary mind, and a state of doubt, of allowed doubt and anxiety, was recommended by the papal system. What a joyful doctrine then was that of the real gospel of remission of sins through Christ alone received by faith!—a doctrine, which is indeed to be found every where in the scriptures; but these were almost unknown among the people at the beginning of the reformation.

4. Should the philosophical sceptic, or the Pharisaical formalist express his surprise, that I should lay so great a stress on the christian article of justification, and wonder that any persons should ever be at a loss to discover the way of obtaining true peace of conscience, it may be useful towards satisfying his scruples, to remind such a character of a round mark of corruption, which mark

* See Rom. vi. end.

prevailed in the times previous to the reformation. This is, the predominance of the Aristotelian philosophy in Europe at that period,—a philosophy, which knew nothing of original sin and native depravity, which allowed nothing to be criminal but certain external flagitious actions, and which was unacquainted with the idea of any righteousness of grace, imputed to a sinner. How many in this age, who neither know nor value Aristotle, do yet altogether follow his self-righteous notions of religion! These are congenial to our fallen nature, and are incapable, while they prevail in the mind, of administering any cure to papal bondage, except that which is worse than the disease itself. They tend to lead men into the depths of Atheistic profaneness. But the person, whom God raised up particularly at this time to instruct an ignorant world, was most remarkably eminent for self-knowledge. Only characters of this sort are qualified to inform mankind in subjects of the last importance towards the attainment of their eternal happiness.—Luther knew himself; and he knew also the scriptural grounds on which he stood in his controversies with the ecclesiastical rulers. His zeal was disinterested, his courage undaunted. Accordingly, when he had once erected the standard of truth, he continued to uphold it with an unconquerable intrepidity, which merits the gratitude and esteem of all succeeding ages.

CHAPTER II.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING INDULGENCES.

Pope Alexander VII., the most flagitious of men, died in the year 1503. After the short interval of the dominion of Pius III. who ruled the church less than a year, Julius II. was elected pontiff. A circumstance attended this election, which deserves to be recorded as a memorable indication of those times. The cardinals agreed upon oath before the election, and obliged the new pontiff after his election to take the same oath,—that a general council should be called within two years to reform the church. The effect of this measure, which so strongly implied the consent of the christian world to the necessity of a reformation, was the council of Pisa. But nothing good was to be expected from Julius, a man, in the language of worldly greatness, renowned for military ambition. By his intrigues the council of Pisa was dissolved, and Julius died in 1513, after he had filled the christian world with blood and confusion by his violence and rapacity.

Leo X.^v succeeded,—a man famous for the encouragement of letters and the fine arts; and deservedly celebrated among the patrons of learned men. But historical veracity can scarcely admit any further eulogium on his character. He was a Florentine of the illustrious house of the Medici, and inherited the elegant taste and munificent spirit of that family. He was elected pope in the thirty-seventh year of his age. Though refined and humanized by his love of the liberal arts, and extremely abhorrent from the savage manners of Alexander and of Julius, he possessed other qualities, no less inconsistent than theirs with the character of a pastor of the church of Christ. An excessive magnificence, a voluptuous indolence, and above all, a total want of religious principle, rendered him perhaps more strikingly void of every sacerdotal qualification than any pontiffs before him. He has been accused of open infidelity; but the proofs are said to be only negative; certainly, however, he at no time took the least pains to discover to mankind, that he had a sincere reverence for religion. It was during the pontificate of this man, that providence gave the severest blow to the authority of the Roman hierarchy, which it had ever received since the days of Gregory II.

Both before his exaltation and after it, he opposed with dexterity and success the laudable attempts after a reformation, which have been mentioned. A council called by this pope, and held in the Lateran palace, was directed under his auspices against the determinations of the council of Pisa. Afterwards, in the year 1517, the university of Paris, renowned at that time through Europe for learning and knowledge, appealed from its decisions to a future general council. It is not necessary to enter into the detail of these transactions. They are here briefly mentioned in a general way for the purpose of showing that common sense and the voice of natural conscience had agreed to the necessity of a reformation, though men knew not the principles on which it ought to proceed. The greatest personages of the times had delivered their sentiments to the same. The existence of the distemper was admitted. The true remedy was unknown: That was to be drawn only from the word of God;—and almost all parties were equally ignorant of the contents of the sacred volumes. In this same year, however, 1517, the spirit of

^v This prelate, the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was ordained at the age of seven years, made an abbot before he was eight years old, and at the age of thirteen became a cardinal! Such was the influence of his father in the court of Rome! Lorenzo, in a prudential letter to his son, tells him, that he had heard with pleasure of his attention to communion and confession; and that there was no better way for him to obtain the favour of heaven, than by habituating himself to the performance of such duties.—*Recess's life of Lorenzo de Medici.*

Lorenzo appears to have known the art of rising in this world, better than the narrow road to eternal life.

Luther was raised up, to instruct the ignorant, to rouse the negligent, and to oppose the scandalous practices of interested and ambitious ecclesiastical rulers.

No reformer had ever an opportunity more favourable to his designs. Such was the temerity of the existing hierarchy, that they might seem even to have purposely afforded to their opponents an advantage for the beginning of a contest, or rather to have been providentially infatuated. Leo X., after he had presided almost five years, having reduced himself to straits by his prodigal expenses of various kinds, and being desirous to complete the erection of St. Peter's Church, begun at Rome by his predecessor Julius II., after his example had recourse to the sale of indulgences, the general nature of which Maimbourg describes much in the same manner as has been done in the foregoing chapter.* These he published throughout the Christian world, granting freely to all, who would pay money for the building of St. Peter's Church, the license of eating eggs and cheese in the time of Lent. This is one of the many ridiculous circumstances which attended Leo's indulgences, and it is gravely related by the papal historians. The promulgation of these indulgences in Germany, was committed to a prelate, the brother of the elector of Brandenburg. His name was Albert, a man who at that very time held two arch-bishoprics, namely, those of Mentz and of Magdeburg, and who himself received immense profits from the sale. Albert delegated the office to John Tetzel, a Dominican inquisitor, well qualified for an employment of this kind. He was a bold and enterprising monk of uncommon impudence, and had already distinguished himself in a similar transaction. He had proclaimed indulgences in support of the war against the Muscovites, and by that means had much enriched the Teutonic knights, who had undertaken that war. "This frontless monk," says a celebrated ecclesiastical historian, "executed this iniquitous commission not only with matchless insolence, indecency, and fraud, but even carried his impiety so far as to derogate from the all sufficient power and influence of the merits of Christ." Mycotius assures us, that he himself heard Tetzel declaim with incredible effrontery concerning the unlimited power of the pope and the efficacy of indulgences. The people believed, that the moment any person had paid the money for the indulgence, he became certain of his salvation, and that the souls, for

whom the indulgences were bought, were instantly released out of purgatory. So Maimbourg allows; and if the people really believed the current doctrine of the times, and looked on the preachers of indulgences as men worthy of credit, they must have believed so. We have formerly seen popes themselves to hold this confident language. John Tetzel boasted, that he had saved more souls from hell by his indulgences, than St. Peter had converted to Christianity by his preaching. He assured the purchasers of them, that their crimes, however enormous, would be forgiven; whence it became almost needless for him to bid them dismiss all fears concerning their salvation. For remission of sins being fully obtained, what doubt could there be of salvation? In the usual form of absolution, written by his own hand, he said, "I, by the authority of Jesus Christ, through the merits of his most holy passion, and by the authority of his blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and of our most holy pope, delegated to me as commissioner, do absolve thee,—first from all ecclesiastical censures however incurred; secondly, from all sins committed by thee however enormous,—for so far the keys of the sacred church extend:—and, I do this by committing to thee all the punishments due to thee in purgatory on account of thy crimes, and I restore thee to the innocence and purity in which thou wast when baptized, so that the gates of punishment" may be shut to thee when dying, and the gates of paradise be opened." Such was the style in which these formulas were written. It is impertinent to blame the abuses committed by the officials; it is not to be supposed, that these formulas were without papal authority; neither has any thing of that kind ever been asserted. In regard to the effect of indulgences in delivering persons from the supposed torments of purgatory, the gross declarations of Tetzel in public are well known. "The moment the money tinkles in the chest, your father's soul mounts up out of purgatory." It does not appear, that the rulers of the hierarchy ever found the least fault with Tetzel as exceeding his commission, till an opposition was openly made to the practice of indulgences. Whence it is evident, that the protestants have not unjustly censured the corruptions of the court of Rome in this respect. Leo is declared to have granted immediately and without hesitation, the profits of the indulgences collected in Saxony and the neighbouring countries as far as the Baltic, to his sister the wife of Prince Cilia, by way of gratitude for personal favours which he had received from the family of the Cibi. The indulgences were farmed to the best bidders, and the undertakers employed such deputies to carry on the traffic, as they thought most likely to promote their interest.

* Seeckend. p. 8. Let the reader remember, that this incomparable author, S. gives us all along the very words of his antagonist, whence the papal as well as the protestant materials are continually held up to view.

Even Du Pin allows, that Leo was naturally proud and lofty; and he confesses, that the erection of St. Peter's Church was the occasion of that pope's having recourse to the sale of indulgences. Book II. Chap. 1. Mosheim.

* Seeckend. p. 14.

* Maimbourg, p. 11.

tive views. The inferior officers concerned in this commerce were daily seen^b in public houses, enjoying themselves in riot and voluptuousness: In fine, whatever the greatest enemy of popery could have wished, was at that time exhibited with the most undisguised impudence and temerity, as if on purpose to render that wicked ecclesiastical system infamous before all mankind.

Indulgences were granted also at this time on many PARTICULAR occasions. The consecrated host had been lost at the parish church at Schiniedeberg in the diocese of Misnia: in consequence of which, the pastor had excommunicated the deacon and the porter of the church. These men, whom the superstition of the times had made culprits, had however recourse to the generosity of Tetzels, who was in the neighbourhood, and who furnished them with a diploma of absolution.^c The prices of these indulgences were accommodated to the various circumstances of petitioners; and thus a plan was formed, and was successfully carrying into execution, which would infallibly lay all orders of men under contribution.

The prodigious sale of indulgences evinces both the profound ignorance of the age, and also the power of superstitious fears, with which the consciences of men were then distressed. This however was the very situation of things, which opened the way for the reception of the gospel. But who was to proclaim the gospel in its native beauty and simplicity? To give a satisfactory answer to this question was no easy matter. The princes, the bishops, and the learned men of the times, saw all this scandalous traffic respecting the pardon of sins, but none was found who possessed the knowledge, the courage, and the honesty, necessary to detect the fraud, and to lay open to mankind the true doctrine of salvation by the remission of sins through Jesus Christ. But at length an obscure pastor appeared, who alone and without help, began to erect the standard of sound religion. No man who believes that "the preparation of the heart is from the Lord," will doubt whether Martin Luther, in this great undertaking, was moved by the Spirit of God.—This extraordinary person, at that time an Augustine monk, was professor or lecturer of the university of Wittenberg in Saxony. That academy was at once a college of students and a society of monks. Frederic the Wise, elector of Saxony, ardently desirous of promoting literary knowledge, had added the former character to the latter, and always showed a steady regard to Luther, on account of his skill and industry in advancing the reputation of that infant seminary of knowledge, which then was very low and absent both in its revenues and its exterior

appearance. Luther preached also from time to time, and heard confessions.^d In the memorable year 1517, it happened, that certain persons, repeating their confessions before him, and owning themselves to be atrocious offenders, yet refused to comply with the penances which he enjoined them, because they said they were possessed of diplomas of indulgences. Luther was struck with the evident absurdity of such conduct, and ventured to refuse them absolution. The persons thus rejected, complained loudly to Tetzels, who was preaching in a town at no great distance. The Dominican inquisitor had not been accustomed to contradiction. He stormed, and frowned, and menaced every one, who dared to opposed him; and sometimes he ordered a pile of wood to be constructed and set on fire for the purpose of striking terror into the minds of heretics. Luther was at that time only thirty-four years old, vigorous both in mind and body, fresh from the schools, and fervent in the scriptures. He saw crowds flock to Wittenberg and the neighbouring towns to purchase indulgences, and having no clear idea of the nature of that traffic, yet sensible of the obvious evils with which it must be attended, he began to signify, in a gentle manner, from the pulpit, that the people might be better employed than in running from place to place to procure INDULGENCES. So cautiously did this great man begin a work, the consequence of which he then so little foresaw. He did not so much as know at that time, who were the receivers of the money. In proof of this, we find he wrote to Albert, arch-bishop of Mentz, who, he understood, had appointed Tetzels to this employment, but with whose personal^e concern in the gains he was then unacquainted, intreating him to withdraw the licence of Tetzels, and expressing his fears of the evils which would attend the sale of indulgences. He sent him likewise certain theses which he had drawn up in the form of queries concerning this subject. He expressed himself with the greatest caution and modesty. In fact, he saw enough to alarm a tender conscience, but he knew not well where to fix the blame. He was not, as yet, fully satisfied in his own mind either as to the extent of the growing mischief, or the precise nature of its cause.—In this state of doubt and anxiety, he wrote also to other bishops, and particularly to his own diocesan the bishop of Brandenburg^f, with whom he was a particular favourite.

Nothing can be more orderly, candid, and open, than this conduct of our reformer.^g Zeal and charity were here united with the

^a Seeckend, p. 17.

• P. 664.

^b Seeckend, p. 16.

^c Du Pin, in conjunction with all the Roman catholic writers, asserts that Luther's zeal for the interest of his own order, led him to oppose the doctrine of indul-

^d Maimbourg, p. 12.

• Seeckend. p. 15.

most perfect regard to ecclesiastical discipline. The bishop of Brandenburg revered the integrity of Luther, while he was aware of the dangerous ground on which he was advancing. "You will oppose the church," he replied, "you cannot think in what troubles you will involve yourself; you had much better be still and quiet." This was not a language calculated to repress the firm and intrepid spirit of the Saxon monk; for, though by no means as yet a competent master of the points in debate, he saw they were of too great magnitude for a conscientious pastor to pass them by unnoticed: He knew too the manners of lower life, and could judge, far better than the bishops in general could do, of the mischievous consequences, which were to be apprehended. With deliberate steadiness he ventured therefore to persevere; and having tried in vain to procure the concurrence of the dignitaries of the church, he published his theses, ninety-five in number; and in fifteen days they were spread throughout Germany. Their effect on the minds of men was rapid and powerful, though Tetzel by threats, had silenced some pastors who had faintly opposed him, and though bishops and doctors, through fear of the flames, remained perfectly silent.

"Thus," says Luther,—for much of the foregoing account is taken from his own words,—“I was commended as an excellent doctor, who, alone had the spirit to attempt so great an undertaking; but the fame, which I had acquired was by no means agreeable to my mind; because I had then some doubts concerning the nature of indulgences, and because I feared that the task was beyond my powers and capacity.”^a

But the real motives of Luther will be discovered in the surest manner by a brief review of the manners and spirit of the man, previous to his open declarations respecting indulgences.—This Saxon reformer was born in the year 1483 at Isleben, a town belonging to the county of Mansfield. His father wrought in the mines of Mansfield which were at that time very famous; and, after the birth of his son Martin Luther, removed to that town, became a proprietor in the mines, discharged public offices there, and was esteemed by all men for his integrity. He gave a very liberal education to Martin, who was remarkable for dutiful affection to his parents in general, though in one instance, to be mentioned presently, he

gences. The best refutation of this calumny is to be derived from a fair statement of facts. It has been said likewise, that Staupitius, the vicar general of Luther's order of monks, and that the elector of Saxony, stimulated Luther to commence his opposition. But there is no where to be found the smallest proof of these assertions. The love of truth itself appears from his whole conduct to have influenced his measures, and the story seems only to be fairly told, in order to convince any candid person, that this was the case.

^a Seebeck, p. 16.

was led away by the superstition of the times, so as to offend his father exceedingly. After he had made great proficiency in his studies at Magdeburg, Eisenach, and Erfurt, he commenced master of arts in the university of Erfurt, at the age of twenty; and having now finished his course of philosophy, he began to give close attention to the science of the civil law, and is said to have intended to advance himself by pleading at the bar; but he was diverted from his purpose by an accident.¹ As he was walking in the fields with one of his most intimate friends, his companion was suddenly killed by lightning; and Luther himself was so terrified, partly by this event, and partly by the horrid noise of the thunder, that while his mind was in the utmost consternation, he formed the hasty resolution of withdrawing from the world, and of throwing himself into the monastery of Erfurt. His father, a man of plain, but sound understanding, strongly remonstrated. The son as strongly pleaded, what he considered as a terrible call from heaven, to take upon himself the monastic vow. "Take care," replied the father, "that you are not ensnared by a delusion of the devil." But the mind of Martin was determined; and filial disobedience, in such a case, was looked on as a virtue. To the great grief and mortification of his father, he entered the monastery in the year 1505.

In one of his letters, he owns that, from the very beginning of his monastic life, he was constantly sad and dejected;² and being unable to give peace to his mind, he at length opened his griefs to John Staupitius, vicar general of the Augustine monks in Germany, a man highly esteemed by Frederic the Wise, and consulted by him particularly in things which concerned the university of Wittenberg. Staupitius himself appears to have had some serious views of religion, and a degree of knowledge at that time very uncommon. After Luther had explained to him the uneasy thoughts with which he was burdened, "You do not know," said he, how useful and necessary this trial may be to you; God does not thus exercise you for nothing; you will one day see that he will employ you as his servant for great purposes. The event gave ample honour to the sagacity of Staupitius, and it is very evident, that a deep and solid conviction of sin, leading the mind to the search of scripture-truth, and the investigation of the way of peace, was the main spring of Luther's whole after-conduct; and indeed this view of our reformer's state of mind furnishes the only key to the discovery of the real motives, by which he was influenced in his public transactions. But

¹ Du Pin. Morel. Maimbourg.

Some authors say, that Luther's intimate friend was found murdered about the same time that he himself was so terrified by the thunder.

² Seebeck, p. 40.

and prejudiced writers of the popish persuasion choose to represent him as having been under the dominion of avarice or ambition, but till they can produce some proofs beyond their own suspicions or bare affirmations, all such slanderous accusation must fall to the ground. In truth, no man was ever more free from avarice and ambition: the fear of God predominated to a very high degree in Luther's mind; and a nice sensibility of conscience, attended with an uncommon insight into the depth of our natural depravity, allowed him no rest. As yet he understood not the scriptures; nor felt that peace of God which passeth understanding. He had too much light to sit down in slothful content and indifference, and too little to discern the rich treasures of the gospel, and apply its healing promises to deep convictions of sin and misery. He remained for above a year not only in constant anxiety and suspense, but in perpetual dread and alarm. All these things are abundantly evident, and beyond all contradiction, to those who are acquainted with his writings.

In the second year after Luther had entered into the monastery, he accidentally met with a Latin bible in the library. It proved to him a treasure. Then he first discovered, that there were more scripture-passages extant than those, which were read to the people. For the scriptures were at that time very little known in the world. In reading the word of God with prayer, his understanding was gradually enlightened, and he found some beams of evangelical comfort to dart into his soul. The same year he was refreshed in his sickness by the discourse of an old monk, who shewed him that remission of sins was to be apprehended by faith alone, and referred him to a passage in Bernard's sermon on the annunciation, where the same doctrine was taught. With incredible ardour he now gave himself up to the study of the scriptures and the books of Augustine. He was at length regarded as the most ingenious and learned man of his order in Germany. But the soul of Luther was constantly panting for something very different from secular glory.

He was ordained in the year 1507, and in the next year was called to the professorship at Wittenberg by Staupitius, where a theatre was opened for the display of his talents both as a teacher of philosophy and as a popular preacher. He excelled in both capacities. Eloquent by nature, and powerful in moving the affections, acquainted also in a very uncommon manner with the elegancies and energy of his native tongue, he became the wonder of his age. These things are allowed very liberally by his enemies;* but it ought to be observed, that the exercises of

his own mind, by which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he was led more and more into christian truth, would naturally add a strength to his oratory, unattainable by those who speak not from the heart. Martin Polichius, a doctor of law and medicine, exclaimed; "This monk will confound all the doctors, will exhibit new doctrine, and reform the whole Roman church; for he is intent on reading the writings of the prophets and apostles, and he depends on the word of Jesus Christ; this, neither the philosophers nor the sophists can subvert." He, who spake thus, was himself looked on as a prodigy of wisdom; and, I suppose, a degree of discernment, less than his, might have shewn an attentive observer, that the didactic plan of Luther was that of an original thinker, who was not likely to confine himself to the beaten track, but to produce something new to mankind. Melancthon's concise account entirely agrees with this statement. "Polichius," says he, "often declared, that there was a strength of intellect in this man, which he plainly foresaw would produce a revolution in the popular and scholastic religion of the times."—Nor does it seem at all improbable, but that if Luther had followed merely the dictates of his own adventurous genius, he might have been the inventor of some novel theological schemes and doctrines. But all tendency to fanciful excursions in the important concerns of religion, was effectually restrained and chastised in the mind of our reformer by his profound reverence for the written word: moreover, from his first entrance into the monastery, he appears to have been taught of God, and to have been led more and more into such discoveries of native depravity, as render a man low in his own eyes, and dispose him to receive the genuine gospel of Christ.

In the year 1510, he was sent to Rome on some business, which related to his own monastery, and this he discharged with so much ability and success, that on his return, he was compelled by the vicar-general to assume the degree of doctor of divinity. He writes, that he did this with great reluctance, and entirely from obedience to his superiors. It is easy indeed for a man to say this; but, from the mouth of Luther it is with me decisive of its truth. For veracity and integrity do evidently appear to have remarkably entered into the character of this reformer, as indeed these virtues are always to be eminently found in those, who have had the most genuine experience of Christianity. The expenses attending this high degree were defrayed by the elector of Saxony, who always admired Luther, and was perfectly convinced of the profundity of his learning and the rectitude of his views in religion. While he had been at Rome, he had discovered something of the singularity of his character,

* Page 18, Maimbourgh. Page 22, Varillaus.

which had attracted the attention of the Italian priests. The external rites of religion, which to them were matter of political formality, with him were serious exercises.

While they hurried over their exercises of the mass, he performed his with a solemnity and devotion, which excited their ridicule, and they bade him to repeat them with more rapidity. A thoughtful mind like his, could not conceive that religious employments should be discharged with levity, and he returned to his monastery more fully convinced than ever, that Rome was not the scene, in which a serious pastor could properly learn the rudiments of religion. He studied and taught the scriptures with increasing ardour and alacrity, and after he had been created doctor, in the year 1512, he expounded the Psalms and the epistle to the Romans, to the great satisfaction of his audience. He studied the Hebrew and the Greek languages, and highly valued the philological labours of the famous Erasmus of Rotterdam, the renowned reviver of classical literature; and while he concurred with that great man in his contempt of monastic trifles, he was intensely studious to learn better and more scriptural notions of God and his attributes, than those which Erasmus so ingeniously satirized. To build was, however, found much more arduous, as it is certainly a far more important work, than to pull down; and from the time that Luther was created a doctor of divinity, he conscientiously devoted his time and talents to the sacred office. Already he was suspected of heresy, because of his dislike of the scholastic doctrines; and he was induced, both from the natural soundness of his understanding, and from the spiritual exercises of his own heart, to reject the Aristotelian corruptions of theology, and to study the genuine doctrines of scripture.

In 1516, he thus wrote to a friend.¹ "I desire to know what your soul is doing; whether wearied at length of its own righteousness, it learns to refresh itself and to rest in the righteousness of Christ. The temptation of presumption in our age is strong in many, and especially in those who labour to be just and good with all their might, and at the same time are ignorant of the righteousness of God, which in Christ is conferred upon us with a rich exuberance of gratuitous liberality. They seek in themselves to work that which is good, in order that they may have a confidence of standing before God, adorned with virtues and merits, which is an impossible attempt. You, my friend, used to be of this same opinion, or rather—this same mistake; so was I; but now I am fighting against the error, but have not yet prevailed."

This interesting and instructive letter de-

monstrates what was the religious frame of our monk at that time. He had received the grace of Christ, and knew the true and only way of salvation; though, in his own eyes at least, he was weak in the faith. He both felt and preached the fundamentals of the gospel, before he appeared in the field against popery, and if he had not been absolutely persecuted into a secession, such was his modesty and love of peace and order, and so little had he then studied the particular corruptions of the hierarchy, that he would, in all probability, have continued to his death an obedient son of the Roman church. Many excellent men had done so before him; because, through inadvertency, they had remained unconscious of the absurdities of the predominant religion. The methods of Providence were however admirable in conducting Luther into the depths of a controversy, to which he seems to have had no inclination. Indulgences were preached, and he saw the evil of them in a practical, rather than a theoretical light, and was thence drawn undesignedly into a contest, the effects of which were salutary to many nations.—Those, who apprehend, that when he began the contest, he was ignorant of the nature of the gospel, appear not to have known the order and method, by which the mind of the Saxon reformer was conducted into religious truth.

In the same year he was appointed, by Staupitius, subaltern vicar; by which office he was authorized to visit about forty monasteries in Misnia and Thuringia. Returning to Wittenberg in June, he wrote to Spalatinus, who was the secretary of the elector, and always shewed himself a steady friend of Luther, in terms which expressed the frank effusions of his own heart, on a review of the state of religion in the country, which the visitation had given him an opportunity of accurately observing. "Many things please your prince, and look great in his eyes, which are displeasing to God. In secular wisdom I confess that he is of all men most knowing; but, in things pertaining to God and which relate to the salvation of souls, I must own that he is blind seven fold." This was the true character of Frederic at that time, though justly esteemed the wisest prince of the age; and though he was sincerely and ingenuously desirous of promoting religion and virtue. In fact, his good understanding was oppressed with a heavy load of the most pitiable superstitions. He was, however, by no means displeased with Luther, for using freedom of speech, and there is reason to believe that, afterwards, he learnt more of the true nature of the gospel, though by very slow degrees.

In the October of the same year, Luther communicated to his learned friend Spalatinus, his thoughts concerning certain of the

¹ Seeckend. p. 20.

fathers, and also concerning Erasmus's method of interpreting scripture.³ This memorable epistle will deserve the particular attention of the reader, as it furnishes judicious and connected observations on Augustine and his contemporaries, and on the fathers both who preceded and who followed them; and as it likewise suggests very useful reflections on the comparative merits of theologians in different periods, from the days of Cyprian to those of Luther and Erasmus.

Luther, to Georg. Spalatinus—

"That, which strikes my mind in considering Erasmus, is this: In interpreting the apostle's account of the righteousness of works, or, of the law, he understands by these terms ceremonial observances ONLY. In the next place, though he admits the doctrine of original sin, he will not allow, that the apostle speaks of it in the fifth chapter to the Romans. Now, if he had carefully read Augustine's Pelagian tracts, especially his account of the spirit and the letter, of the guilt of sin and the remission of it; and had observed how he speaks in perfect unison with the best of the fathers, from Cyprian to Ambrose, he might have better understood the Apostle Paul, and also have conceived more highly of Augustine as an expositor, than he has hitherto done. In dissenting from Erasmus' judgment in this point, I must frankly declare, that I as much prefer Augustine's expositions to those of Jerome as he prefers those of Jerome to Augustine's. I am, it is true, an Augustine monk; but that circumstance has no influence on my judgment; for till I had read this father's works, I had not the least prejudice in his favour. But I see that Jerome studiously endeavours to draw every thing to a merely historical meaning," and what is very extraordinary, where he expounds the scriptures as it were occasionally or accidentally, as in his epistles for instance, he does it in a much sounder manner than when he interprets professedly and on purpose. The righteousness of the law is by no means confined to ceremonies; for, though it includes these, it still more directly respects an obedience to the whole dialogue, which obedience, when it takes place to a certain degree and yet has not Christ for its foundation, though it may produce such men as your Fabricius's, and your Regulus's, that is, very upright moralists according to man's judgment, has nothing in it of the nature of genuine righteousness. For men are not made truly righteous, as Aristotle supposes, by performing certain actions which are externally good,—for they may still be counterfeit characters;—but, men must have righteous principles in the first place, and then they will not fail to

perform righteous actions. God first respects Abel, and then his offering.⁴ I beg you would put Erasmus in mind of these things. In so doing, you will discharge the duties both of a friend and of a christian. As on the one hand, I hope and wish that he may be celebrated through the christian world, so on the other, I fear many may be induced by the authority of his name, to patronise that literal and lifeless mode of interpreting scripture, into which almost all commentators have fallen, since the time of Augustine.—I may be thought presumptuous and perhaps severe in thus criticising many great men: my apology is, that I feel a concern for the cause of true theology, and for the salvation of the brethren."

A little before the controversy concerning indulgences, George, duke of Saxony, intreated Staupitius to send him some learned and worthy preacher. The vicar-general in compliance with his request, dispatched Luther with strong recommendations to Dresden. George gave him an order to preach: The sum of Luther's sermon was this: "That no man ought to despair of the possibility of salvation; that those, who heard the word of God with attentive minds, were true disciples of Christ, and were elected, and predestinated to eternal life. He enlarged on the subject, and shewed that the whole doctrine of predestination, if the foundation be laid in Christ, was of singular efficacy to dispel that fear, by which men, trembling under the sense of their own unworthiness, are tempted to fly from God, who ought to be our sovereign refuge. An honourable matron, who attended the palace, and who had heard Luther, was asked by George the duke at dinner how she liked the discourse. I should die in peace, said she, if I could hear such another sermon. The duke, in much anger, replied, "I would give a large sum of money, that a sermon of this sort, which encourages men in a licentious course of life, had never been preached." And he repeated this several times. Within the space of a month, the lady was confined in bed by sickness, and soon after died rejoicing in her prospects of future glory. Fabricius concludes the account with saying, "From that time Luther came no more to Dresden." That capital of modern Saxony was then part of the dukedom of George, who proved one of the most virulent enemies of Lutheranism. He was the uncle of prince Frederic the Wise. Like Pharisaic formalists in all ages, he perversely misconstrued the doctrine of free salvation by Jesus Christ, which Luther preached, and which is intended to enable humble and repenting souls to serve God with lively faith and cheerful hope. The duke of Saxony, I observe, perversely

³ Lib. I. ep. 20.

⁴ A merely historical meaning. A mere narration of facts, as opposed to a spiritual meaning, and a practical application to every man's conscience.

⁵ Gen. IV.

⁶ Sect. p. 23.

⁷ Orig. Sax. Lib. vii.

misconstrued this doctrine, as though it had a tendency to persuade men to live in sin; but the good matron abovementioned, who resided at his court, appears to have tasted of that bitterness of true conviction of sin, which only can render the doctrine of grace delightful and salutary to the mind.

How precious this doctrine must have been to the mind of Luther himself, may be conceived from a well authenticated circumstance,^a which evinces the state of mental bondage, in which he had been held. Having for many days neglected, through the intenseness of his studies, to recite the canonical hours, he, in compliance with the pope's decrees, and to satisfy his conscience, actually shut himself up in his closet, and recited what he had omitted, with punctilious exactness, and with such severe attention and abstinence, as reduced his strength exceedingly, brought on nearly a total want of sleep for the space of five weeks, and almost produced symptoms of a weakened intellect.—Is it to be wondered at, that he, who at length found relief and liberty by the grace of Christ, should be zealous to preach the mystery of the cross to his fellow-creatures?

I have now laid before the curious reader some interesting particulars of the private life of Luther, previous to his assumption of that public character, which has made his name immortal. The serious christian will adore the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence, which, by preparatory exercises of soul, had directed this extraordinary personage into the true light and liberty of the gospel of Christ, and fitted him for the great work to which he was called. At the same time it seems a certain fact, that the Saxon reformer was not induced to act the part, which has given so great a celebrity to his name, from motives of personal malice, or of ambition, or of avarice, but purely from the fear of God, from a conscientious regard to evangelical truth, from a zeal for the divine glory, and for the profit of the souls of his fellow-creatures.

There are two points concerning Luther, on which all the most respectable, even of the papal party, unanimously concur in their testimony. The one is,—That his learning, genius and capacity were of the first magnitude. . It may seem proper to mention this, because some modern writers, who appear almost wholly ignorant of the real character of the man, have rashly represented him as a person of contemptible knowledge. But this is the common method of treating many great men, whose studies and attainments have happened to be but little connected with the pursuits and discoveries of the eighteenth century; and till readers learn the practice of so much candour, as may dispose them to

make equitable allowances for the taste of the times in which men of great abilities and great accomplishments have made their appearance, such superficial authors will always find admirers.—The other particular, relative to our illustrious reformer, is this,—That his life is allowed to be without blemish.—In fact, the Romanists, for the purpose of indulging the spirit of censure, are obliged to have recourse to surmises, for want of realities. When we are much out of humour with a person, it is human nature to ascribe his very best actions to bad motives. But the slanderous representations of enemies ought never to be substituted in the place of authentic documents. The writers alluded to, may FANCY, that Luther's conduct is best accounted for on the supposition, that pride, vanity, ambition and resentment, was the ruling passions of the man they dislike; nevertheless, all readers of cool judgment will take care to distinguish between their prejudiced, ill-natured, conjectures, and substantial proofs.

Far be it, however, from the historian's design to insinuate, that there were no faults or defects in the character which he so much admires. Besides the incessant ebullitions of native depravity,—in the confession of which no man was ever more earnest than Luther,—all real Christians,—the most eminent saints not excepted,—have their infirmities, and their faults, which cost them much inward pain and sorrow; yet, it should ever be remembered, that in judging of true followers of Christ, by whatever name we may choose to call either their defective attainments or their positive blemishes, no fault, no imperfection, no falling short of the "perfect man in Christ Jesus," can be allowed, but what is absolutely consistent with sincerity of heart.—The very candid and accurate moralist Seckendorf, who is so useful to my researches, defies all the adversaries of Luther to fix any just censure on his character, except what may be ranked under two heads,—namely, a disposition to anger, and an indulgence in jesting. Beyond all doubt the Saxon reformer was of a choleric temper, and he too often gave way to this constitutional evil, as he himself bitterly laments. Neither is it to be denied that he also too much encouraged his natural propensity to facetiousness. The monks of his time were, in general, guilty of the like fault, and often to so great a degree, as very improperly to mix scurrilities with sacred subjects. Moreover, the vices and the follies of those, whom Luther opposed, afforded a strong temptation both to a spirit of anger and of ridicule. For, however severe he may be thought in many of his invectives, we are compelled by unquestionable evidence to confess, that his keenest satirical poems never reached the demerits of those who rel-

^a Vol. I. p. 344. Bavar. Seck. p. 21.

ed the church in that age. But, after all that can be said in mitigation, it must be owned, that a reformer ought to have considered not so much what they deserved, as what became the character he had to support; namely, that of a serious christian, zealous for the honour of his God, displeased with the vices of his clerical brethren, and grieved on account of the pitiable ignorance of the people, yet more desirous of curing the prevailing evils, than of exposing them.

These unhappy blemishes in Luther, doubtless appear much more offensive to us, than they did in his own time among men of ruder manners, and accustomed to a greater freedom both of action and of expression in their mutual intercourse. They form the darkest shades in his writings, which, in all other respects, are truly admirable. One cannot but feel both some surprise and regret, that this great and good man should have failed, in so considerable a degree, to imitate his favourite author. An uniform spirit of meekness is the singular excellence, which adorns the pages of Augustine.

These defects, which we have mentioned, were too considerable to be passed over in silence; and having now discharged the duty of an impartial historian, we leave it to the judicious reader himself to appreciate their just operation in lessening his esteem and veneration for this extraordinary personage.—In contemplating the other qualities and endowments of our reformer we have no hesitation in affirming, that it is not easy to find a more blameless or even a more excellent character. No man since the apostle's days had penetrated into the sacred oracles with such singular felicity. He was endowed with a greatness of soul far beyond the common lot of men:—Dangerous gift in a fallen creature! It was through divine grace, that he was enabled to display and persevere in a conduct the most consistent, uncorrupt, and disinterested. His bold and adventurous spirit never appears in any one instance to have made the smallest encroachment on the most perfect integrity. Humane, generous, and pleasurable, he was rarely diverted from the path of equity; and, notwithstanding the uncommon vehemence of his temper, he was often submissive and condescending. With an exquisite sensibility and readiness of conception, with a zeal and an imagination, which never remitted their ardour for a single moment, he was most perfectly free from enthusiasm; and with a great capacity and unparalleled intrepidity, he seems to have been devoid of ambition, and contented to live all his days in very moderate circumstances. *Only the Wise Disposer of all events, for the glory of his own name, and for the revival of true religion in Europe, by the effectual operation of his Holy Spirit, could have produced, at the season when most wanted, so*

faithful a champion, and possessed of so much vigour of intellect, of so daring a spirit, and of so truly humble and christian-like a temper.

Such was the illustrious Luther, when he was called upon by Divine Providence, to enter the lists, alone and without one assured ally, against the hosts of the pretended successor of St. Peter, who was then domineering over the christian world in all his grandeur and plenitude of power.—

I shall conclude this chapter with laying before the reader several concise testimonies to the talents and virtues of Luther, extracted from the writings of popish authors, who will not be suspected of any partiality towards the man, whom they have been accustomed to consider as a detestable heretic. To transcribe the various encomiums which have been written on this celebrated character by his friends and admirers, by protestant authors, and by historians in general, would be an endless labour.

The Jesuit Maimbourg, in his history of Lutheranism, records many particulars respecting the learning and abilities of this celebrated heretic, as he calls him, which have not yet been mentioned.

“He possessed a quick and penetrating genius; he was indefatigable in his studies; and frequently so absorbed in them as to abstain from meat for whole days together. He acquired great knowledge of languages and of the fathers. He was remarkably strong and healthy, and of a sanguine, bilious, temperament. His eyes were piercing and full of fire. His voice sweet, and vehement when once fairly raised. He had a stern countenance; and though most intrepid and high spirited, he could dissemble the appearance of modesty and humility whenever he pleased, which however was not often the case. In his breast was lodged plenty of fuel for pride and presumption: Hence his indiscriminate contempt of whatever opposed his heresies; hence his brutal treatment of kings, emperors, the pope, and of every thing in the world that is deemed most sacred and inviolable. Passionate, resentful, and domineering, he was continually aiming to distinguish himself by venting novel doctrines, and on no occasion could be induced to retract what he had once advanced. He maintained, that Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, Bonaventura, and others, had undermined the foundations of true philosophy and of Christian theology; and he endeavoured to raise up a system of his own, upon the ruins of those very great geniuses. This is an exact portrait of Martin Luther, of whom it may be truly said, there was in the man a great mixture both of good and of bad qualities: the bad predominated; but he was abundantly more corrupt in his thoughts and sentiments, than in his life and man-

ners. He was always reckoned to live sufficiently blameless while he remained in the monastery, and till he absolutely ruined all his good qualities by his heresies."

Varillas, or Varillasius, a celebrated French historian, in his diffuse history of various heresies, speaks of Luther in the following manner: "This Augustine monk united in his single person all the good and all the bad qualities of the heresiarchs of his time. To the robustness, health, and industry of a German, nature seems here to have added the spirit and vivacity of an Italian. Nobody exceeded him in philosophy and scholastic theology; nobody equalled him in the art of speaking. He was a most perfect master of eloquence. He had completely discovered where lay the strength or the weakness of the human mind; and, accordingly, he knew how to render his attacks successful. However various or discordant might be the passions of his audience, he could manage them to his own purposes; for he presently saw the ground on which he stood; and even if the subject was too difficult for much argument, he carried his point by popular illustration and the use of figures. In ordinary conversations, he displayed the same power over the affections, which he had so often demonstrated in the professorial chair and the pulpit. He rarely attempted to convince; his method was to inflame men's passions, and afterwards gradually to insinuate his opinions. No man, either of his own time or since, spoke or wrote the German language, or understood its niceties, better than Luther. Often, when he had made his first impression by bold strokes of eloquence, or by a bewitching plesantry of conversation, he completed his triumphs by the elegance of his German style. On the contrary, he was rude, satirical, ambitious, and ungrateful. Disposed to anger on the slightest occasions, and for the most part implacable. He was much addicted to excesses at the table, and was CAPABLE of the usual concomitant vices; though his monastic life deprived him almost entirely of opportunities of indulging himself in them."

No remarks need be made on these entertaining descriptions of Luther. The surmises and the exaggerations they contain, are sufficiently obvious: The reader will easily separate them from the truth, and will at the same time perceive how much the account, which we have given of our reformer, is corroborated by these enemies of the reformation.

Moreri, in his *Historical Miscellany*, says of Luther, "This heresiarch gloried in his apostacy, and in the lamentable schism of the church, and filled his writings with his poisons. He composed various works; and it cannot be denied that he was a man of much learning and fire of genius. Vanity was his

motive, whatever pains may have been taken to represent him as a person of integrity and moderation. Henry VIII. king of England, in answer to Luther, had sent to pope Leo, a learned defence of the seven sacraments. Luther replied to the monarch in so insolent a manner, that it was easy to see from this single instance, that a man of such a temper could not be under the influence of the Spirit of God. Besides, he published a seditious book against the bishops; and had the IMPUDENCE to OFFEND THE ROYAL BULL, in which he himself was excommunicated."

As my chief object in giving these extracts is to satisfy the reader, from the testimony of Luther's enemies, of his great learning and talents, I content myself with quoting briefly the substance of what has been repeatedly and distinctly conceded by the most noted Roman catholic writers, in regard to these points; and I entirely omit many scandalous falsehoods, which have been invented by malicious advocates for the papal system, with the view of defaming the character of our reformer. His two blemishes have been mentioned above, as allowed by the incomparable Seckendorf,—and these,—no judicious defender of protestants or of protestantism will ever undertake to defend.

Those who wish to see a full account, and also a confutation, of the idle inventions and abominable falsehoods here alluded to, may consult, with advantage, the celebrated *Historical and Critical Dictionary* by Peter Bayle. This author, though justly esteemed an infidel in religion, was a man of brilliant parts, and acute intellect; and he has collected together much useful information respecting Martin Luther, and both his friends and his adversaries.

"I," says this writer, "shall chiefly insist on the many falsehoods, which have been published respecting Luther. No regard has been paid, in this point, to the rules of the art of slandering. And yet the authors of them have assumed all the confidence of those who fully believe that the public will implicitly expose their stories, be they ever so absurd. They accuse him of having confessed that he had struggled for ten years together with his conscience, and at last had become perfectly master of it, and fallen into Atheism. They impudently maintain that he denied the immortality of the soul. They charge him with having gross and carnal ideas of heaven, and with composing hymns in honour of drunkenness. Most of these calumnies are grounded upon some words in a certain book published by Luther's friends, to which his adversaries give a horrid meaning, and very different from this ecclesiastic's real thoughts. His greatest enemies could not deny, that he had eminent qualities; and history affords nothing more surprising than his exploits. For a simple monk to give so

made a shock to popery, is what we cannot sufficiently admire. He had made great progress in scholastic learning, yet no one fell so foul upon the method of philosophising at that time, nor was any man more vehemently bent against the great Aristotle."

The same author produces the following remarkable citation from a noted French writer, who was one of Luther's slanderers.*

"Luther was a perfect atheist. His own disciple Dr. Aurifaber, deposes, as an eyewitness,—that he heard Luther himself say in the pulpit,—he thanked God he felt no longer any disturbance of his conscience, and that he began to see the fruits of his gospel among his disciples. "Nam post revelatum Evangelium meum," said he, "Virtus est occisa, iustitia oppressa, temperantia ligata, veritas lacerata, fides clauda, nequitia quotidiana, devotio pulsa, hæresis relicta." Mons'.

Giraffe translates this passage thus: "I have fought with such success, that I have stifled the seeds of virtue, oppressed justice, extinguished sobriety, rent truth to pieces, broken the pillars of faith, made villany familiar, banished devotion and introduced heresy." Upon which P. Bayle makes the following excellent observation. "There is no need to observe here, that all this is to be understood by the rules of contraries; the thing speaks for itself; and I am certain there is no honest man, whatever religion he is of, but will detest or pity the extravagance of such a slanderer."—It is not at all improbable but Luther might use, in his pulpit, the very words here brought against him in accusation; nor is it necessary to suppose, that, in the warmth and haste of eloquence, he should even have used the words, THEY SAID, OR MINE ENEMIES CRIED OUT, to make his meaning clear. Nothing can be more obvious than the sense of the citation, even as it stands. "After my way of expounding the gospel became known," says Luther, THEY SAID, OR MINE ENEMIES CRIED OUT, "Virtue is stifled, justice is oppressed," and so on; and we are left to wonder how an omission, which is quite common in all vehement harangues, whatever be the language spoken, could possibly be made, by any reasonable man, the occasion of so much calumny. Those, however, will wonder less, who have been accustomed to observe, how frequently it happens in our times, that sound and zealous preachers of the gospel are misrepresented and reviled, as though their interpretations of the nature of Christ's salvation had a tendency to promote licentiousness.

Let not the reader forget, that my present object is to produce evidences of Luther's learning and talents from the mouths of his

adversaries, or at least from the mouths of those, who have shewn no particular predilection for the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. It would be with much pain and reluctance, that I should be compelled to place the famous Erasmus among either of these classes.

—His great learning, his elegant taste, and his acute understanding, are all unquestionable; neither is there any doubt how very serviceable his writings proved in preparing men's minds to approve the holdier and more decisive measures of Luther. But still, in my judgment, the proofs of his love of ease, of fame, and of the esteem of persons of rank and consequence, are far more numerous, than any examples which can be produced of his sincere regard for the essential doctrines of christianity, or of the evangelical humility of his own mind. Though it may be extremely difficult to delineate accurately a character of this sort, his observations, nevertheless, on the great men and great transactions of his own times, cannot fail to be valuable.—Moreover, as Erasmus at no time, I believe, was very fond of Luther, and as they very much opposed and controverted each others opinions, the judgment of this illustrious scholar respecting the great Saxon reformer, may be laid before the reader in this place with much propriety.—Indeed the following extracts are the more important and also suitable to be cited here, because, first, they decisively prove the abilities of Luther, and, secondly, they contain many facts and circumstances, which demonstrate the knowledge, learning and integrity of our reformer, and lastly, they very materially corroborate the preceding account of the state of the religious world in general, when this extraordinary man began his opposition to the existing ecclesiastical tyranny.

Erasmus had so good an opinion of Luther's intentions, that in one of his epistles, he expresses his belief, "That God had sent him to reform mankind." Melancthon, in his life of Luther, assures us from his own knowledge, that the elector of Saxony, besought Erasmus in the very kindest manner, to tell him freely, whether he judged Luther to be mistaken, respecting the principal controversies in which he was then engaged; and that Erasmus, on this occasion, spoke out,— "That Luther's sentiments were true, but that he wished to see more mildness in his manner." In another letter to the elector he says, "The cause of Luther is invidious, because, he at once attacks the bellies of the monks and the diadem of the pope." In various other letters, and particularly in one written to cardinal Campegius in the year 1590, Erasmus opens his mind freely concerning Luther and his proceedings. He acknowledges that he possessed great natural talents; and that he had a genius particularly adapted to the explanation of difficult

* Mons. Caraffa.
 † All becomes clear by supposing the words here printed in capitals to have been implied, though not actually said.

points of literature, and for rekindling the sparks of genuine evangelical doctrine, which were almost extinguished by the trifling subtleties of the schools. He adds, that men of the very best character, of the soundest learning, and of the most religious principles, were much pleased with Luther's books; further, that in proportion as any person was remarkable for upright morals and gospel-purity, he had the less objections to Luther's sentiments. "Besides," said he, "the life of the man is extolled even by those who cannot bear his doctrines.—Some, indeed, in hatred to his person, condemn what is true, pervert and misinterpret what is right, and make him pass for a heretic, for saying the same things which they allow to have been pious and orthodox in Bernard and Austin." Erasmus declares, that he had endeavoured, to the utmost of his power, to hinder Luther from being oppressed by a faction of raging zealots. It grieved him that a man of such *FINE PARTS* should be rendered desperate by the mad cries and bellowings of the monks. We ought, continued this sagacious Hollander, "to take notice of the source and spring of all this evil. The world was burthened with human inventions in the business of religion, loaded with the opinions and doctrines of the schools, and oppressed with the tyranny of the monks and begging friars. I do not condemn them all, but many of them are so mad, that for the sake of interest and rule, they hamper the consciences of men on purpose. They lay aside Christ and modesty, they preach nothing but their own innovations, and oftentimes scandalous doctrines. They speak of indulgences after such a manner, as is insupportable even to the laity. By these and such like methods, the power of the gospel is dwindled to nothing; and it is to be feared, that matters becoming continually worse, the little spark of christian piety, by which the stifled spirit of charity might be re-kindled, will be entirely quenched. The chief parts of religion are lost in ceremonies more than judaical. Good men lament and weep for these things; and even divines, who are not monks, acknowledge the truth of them, as also some of the monks in their private conversations. These things, I believe, first put Luther upon the dangerous work of opposing some of the most intolerable and shameless abuses. For what can we think otherwise of a person, who neither aims at worldly honour or riches? I do not now consider the charges which they bring against the man; I speak only of the apparent grounds of their animosity towards him. Luther had the boldness to call in question the good of indulgences; but others had first spoken too much and too boldly for them. Luther has dared to speak indecently of the power of the pope of Rome; but others had first exalted it too indecently; and

in particular, three preaching friars, Alvarus, Sylvester, and the cardinal of St. Sixtus. He dared to despise the decrees of Thomas Aquinas; but the Dominicans had extolled them almost above the gospel. He dared to disclose some doubts in the matter of confession, but the monks continually perplexed the consciences of men upon that head. He dared to reject the conclusions of the schools in part; but others ascribed too much to them, and yet disagreed with them as well as he, altering them often, and introducing new notions in the place of those they abolished. It was matter of grief to pious minds, to hear almost nothing said in the schools of the doctrines of the gospel,—and that, in the sermons, little mention was made of Christ, but much of papal power, and of the opinions of recent writers.—Luther has written a great deal that relishes more of imprudence than irreligion; but the greatest offence he has given, is, his want of respect to Thomas Aquinas; his lessening of the profits of indulgences; his despising of the mendicant friars; his preferring of the gospel to the doctrines of the schools; his opposing of the sophistries of disputants;—all these are intolerable heresies."¹

The reader, in this last instance, has had before him a witness, perfectly competent to decide on many of the points, which, usually, afford matter for much controversy between papists and protestants; and, as we trust, the true character of the Saxon reformer, in regard to his motives, abilities, and learning, is now fully ascertained; we return to the narrative of the progress of the dispute concerning the sale of indulgences.

Though this chapter contains the most material circumstances relative to the earlier part of Luther's life, the reader may not be displeased to peruse the following passages, the substance of which is taken from the preface to the second volume of Luther's Works. This preface is sometimes called the *Life of Luther*, and is particularly valuable, because it was written by the pious Melancthon after Luther's decease, and because it is wanting in some of the copies of the Wittenberg Latin editions.*

The excellent writer begins thus:

The Rev. Martin Luther had given reason to hope, that in the preface to this part of his writings he would have favoured us with some account of his own life, and of the occasions of those contests in which he was so much concerned. And no doubt he would have done so, if, before this volume was

* Vid. Kraem. Epist. and Brandt's history of the Reformation.

* It has been published separately; but it is not easy to be met with.

printed, he had not been called from the present mortal life, to the eternal enjoyment of God and the heavenly church. A luminous review of his private life would have been peculiarly useful: the narrative must have been full of lessons for the admonition of posterity, and also full of examples for the encouragement of piety: moreover it would have confuted the slanderous fictions of his enemies; who insinuate, that he was stirred up by princes or others to undermine the dignity of bishops, or that he was induced, through the violence of private ambition, to break the bonds of monastic slavery.

It were much to be wished that such a narrative had been executed by himself with a copiousness of detail. For though the malevolent might have objected, that the author was trumpeting his own praise, we know very well, that HE was too grave a character, to have allowed the smallest deviation from truth. Besides, as many good and wise men are yet alive who, he must have known, were well acquainted with all the transactions,—to have devised falsehoods under such circumstances must have been perfectly ridiculous.

I now proceed to recite, with the strictest regard to truth, such matters relative to his life, as I either actually saw or was told of by himself.

The parents of Luther took especial care in their daily instructions to educate their son in the knowledge and fear of God, and in a sense of his duty. The youth soon displayed very great talents, and particularly in an inclination to eloquence. With great ease he surpassed his school-fellows in copiousness of language, both in prose and verse; and if he had been so fortunate as to have met with suitable teachers, his great capacity would have enabled him to go through all the sciences; neither is it improbable but the milder studies of a sound philosophy and a careful habit of elaborate composition might have been useful in moderating the vehemence of his natural temper: but at Erfurt he was introduced to the dry, thorny, logic of the age; and his penetrating genius quickly made him master of all that was valuable in that subject.

His capacious mind, eager for knowledge, was not content with this. He proceeded to Cicero, Virgil, Livy, and the rest. Nor did he read these authors, as boys do, for the sake of the words, but for the instruction they furnish. He entered into the spirit of the writers; and as his memory was in an extraordinary degree tenacious, almost every thing he had read, was at hand for practice. Hence the superior genius of Luther became the admiration of the whole university.

His parents had intended these great powers of eloquence, and this vast strength of genius, to be employed in public business

for the advantage of the state; but Luther, contrary to their judgment, suddenly left the study of the law, and entered the Augustine monastery at Erfurt. There he not only gave the closest attention to ecclesiastical learning, but also personally submitted to the severest discipline. He far exceeded every one in all kinds of religious exercises,—in reading,—in arguing,—in fasting,—in praying. And as he was neither a little, nor a weak man, I have often been astonished to observe how little meat or drink he seemed to require. I have seen him, when he was in perfect health, absolutely neither eat nor drink during four days together; at other times I have seen him, for many days, be content with the slight allowance of a very little bread and a herring on each day.

The immediate occasion of his commencing that course of life which he judged most adapted to sacred duties and the promotion of piety, was this,—as he himself told me, and as many persons well know.—While he was deeply reflecting on the astonishing instances of the divine vengeance, so great alarm would suddenly affect his whole frame, as almost to frighten him to death. I was once present, when through intense exertion of mind in the course of an argument respecting some point of doctrine, he was so terrified, as to retire to a neighbour's chamber, place himself on the bed, and pray aloud, frequently repeating these words, "He hath concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all." These alarming agitations came upon him either for the first time, or, certainly, they were the severest in that year when he lost an intimate companion, who was killed; but I know not by what accident.

It was not, therefore, poverty, but the love of a pious life, which induced Luther to enter the monastery. And as this was his grand object, he was not content with the usual scholastic learning, though his proficiency in it was surprising. He was not in quest of fame, but of religious improvement. He soon comprehended the subtle processes of the schools, but his heart was not in those things. The fountains of SACRED AND HEAVENLY LEARNING, that is, the writings of the prophets and the apostles, were more suited to his taste; and these he studied with the greatest avidity. The anxieties and terrors above mentioned had increased this turn of mind. He wished to know the WILL OF GOD, to build his faith on the firmest foundations, and to cultivate an habitual reverence for the divine commands.

He used to say, that an elderly priest in the monastery, to whom he had opened the distresses of his conscience, had been of great use to him, by his discourses on the nature of faith, and by drawing his attention to that expression in the creed, "I believe in the

remission of sins." The elderly priest interpreted this article as implying not merely a GENERAL BELIEF,—for the devils had a faith of that sort,—but, that it was the command of God that each particular person should apply this doctrine of the remission of sins to his own particular case: and this interpretation, he said, was confirmed by a reference to a passage of St. Bernard, in one of his sermons, who maintains the same sentiment, and also produces the Apostle Paul in support of the doctrine of free justification by faith.

This conversation proved a great comfort to the mind of Luther. He was led to attend to St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, which is so often inculcated by that apostle. By reading and comparing together different parts of the Old and New Testament, and by an increased dependence on God in daily prayer, he gradually acquired more light and saw the emptiness of the usual interpretations of scripture.

He then began to read the works of Augustine, where he found many decisive passages which confirmed his idea of faith, and gave him much satisfaction. He read other divines, but stuck close to Augustine.

Frederic, the elector of Saxony, heard him preach; and much admired the excellent matter of his sermons, as well as the nervous language and genius of the preacher.*

Afterwards Luther undertook to expound the Psalms and the epistle to the Romans. He showed the difference between the law and the gospel: he refuted the ancient Pharisaical error, at that time prevalent both in the schools and the pulpit,—that men by their own works may merit the remission of their sins, and be accounted righteous before God.—Thus he recalled men's minds to the office of the Son of God; and, like John the Baptist, showed them the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Moreover, he taught them, that remission of their sins is freely for Christ's sake, and that this benefit is to be received by faith.

This revival of most excellent doctrine procured him a great and extensive authority; especially as the LIFE of the man harmonized with his professions. His language was not merely that of the lips, but proceeded from the heart. The proverb was remarkably verified in this case—"The pious conduct of a man maketh his speech persuasive." It was this circumstance, namely, the sanctity of his life, that induced some excellent characters to comply with the plans which he afterwards proposed of changing certain established ceremonies.

Not that Luther, at this time, meditated the smallest innovation on the customary observances. On the contrary, he was a most

rigid disciplinarian; and had broached nothing to alarm. But he was illustrating more and more those doctrines of which ALL stand in need,—the doctrines of repentance, remission of sins, faith, and the true consolations of the cross. Pious christians were delighted with these things; and even learned men were much pleased to see Christ, the prophets and the apostles brought, as it were, out of darkness and prison; and to hear of the difference between law and gospel and their promises, and between philosophy and the word of God, concerning which important matters, not a line was to be found in Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and such like. Add to this, the writings of Erasmus proved great incitements to the cultivation of the Greek and Latin languages. Luther himself diligently studied Hebrew and Greek for the purpose of obtaining a more perfect knowledge of the scriptures.

Such were the employments of Luther at the time when those prostitute indulgences were first proclaimed by that most impudent Dominican Tetzel. Burning with the love of every thing that was godly, and irritated by Tetzel's shameful discourses, he published some propositions concerning the nature of indulgences. The Dominicans, in return, publicly burnt Luther's propositions, and menaced the heretic himself with the flames. In a word, the outrageous conduct of Tetzel and his associates absolutely compelled Luther to discuss the subject at length, in support of the cause of truth.

In this manner began the controversy between the reformers and the papists. As yet Luther never dreamt of changing any one of the rites of the church, nor even of entirely rejecting indulgences. They, therefore, charge him falsely, who say that he made use of the affair of the indulgences as a plausible pretext for subverting the establishment, or for increasing either his own power or that of others.

Frederic of Saxony, in particular, conducted himself agreeably to the known character of that prince. He neither incited nor applauded Luther: he was ever distinguished as a lover of peace; and it was with a painful concern that he beheld the prospect of still greater dissensions.

But he was a wise man, and was influenced not merely by worldly maxims, which always direct us to crush as quickly as possible the slightest beginnings of every innovation: he revered the DIVINE commands, which enjoin attention to the gospel, and forbid an obstinate resistance to the truth. Thus this prince submitted to God, read his word with diligence, and never discouraged whatever his judgment pointed out to him as sound doctrine. Moreover, I know that he often asked wise and learned men to give him their sentiments freely on the disputed points,

and in particular at Cologne he besought Erasmus to open his mind to him respecting the controversies in which Luther was engaged. There Erasmus spoke without disguise: "The man is right; but there is a want of mildness in him."

On this head duke Frederic afterwards wrote to Luther, and exhorted him in the most serious manner, to moderate the asperity of his style.

It is also well known that Luther promised cardinal Cajetan to be silent, provided his adversaries were also enjoined silence. From which it most clearly appears that he had, at that time, formed no purpose of raising contests in the church, but wished for peace; till ignorant writers provoked him on all sides, and drew him into fresh disputes.

The grand question concerning the supremacy of the Roman See was raised by Eckius for the purpose of inflaming the hatred of the pope and of princes against Luther.

Our reformer, not only in the beginning of the contest, undertook the cause of truth, without the least motive of private ambition, but also remained, throughout the course of it, always mindful of his own peculiar department; so that though he was naturally of an ardent and passionate temper, yet he constantly disclaimed the use of force, or of any other arms but those of argument and instruction. He wisely distinguished between things that were totally different in every way; for example, the duties of a bishop instructing the church of God, and of a magistrate holding the sword as a restraint on the licentious multitude.

Accordingly, when Satan, who loves to disgrace religion by the ruinous errors of poor miserable men, raised up several seditious characters to excite tumults and irregularities, Luther was ever the man to condemn such outrages in the strongest language; and, both by his precept and example, to adorn and strengthen the bonds of social order and polity. WHEN I SERIOUSLY REFLECT ON THIS MATTER, and consider how many men in the church have failed in this very point, I do not hesitate to affirm distinctly, that no human care or diligence alone could have been equal to this effect; but that there must also have been a divine principle which illumined and directed his mind, and preserved him so constantly within the proper limits of his duty.

"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," was his constant exhortation: In other words, worship God in true penitence and in an open avowal of the truth, in true prayer and in a conscientious discharge of duties: And obey with reverence and in the fear of God all the civil regulations of the community to which you belong. These

were the very rules to which Luther himself adhered in his practice. He gave to God the things which are God's. He taught the truth, and he offered up his prayers to God on right principles; he likewise possessed the other virtues which are pleasing to God. Lastly, as a citizen, he avoided every thing that had the smallest tendency to sedition. These virtues rank so high in my estimation, that in this life, I think, greater accomplishments cannot be desired.

But while we praise the excellencies of the man who made so becoming a use of his heavenly gifts, it is our bounden duty to give particular thanks to God, that he hath been pleased, through Luther's means, to restore to us the light of the gospel, and it is also our duty to preserve and spread the doctrine which he taught. It is this doctrine which must guide our prayers, and even our whole lives. It is this doctrine, of which the Son of God says, "If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."

In fact, a false philosophy, and the succeeding errors of Pelagius, had exceedingly corrupted the pure faith of the scriptures. St. Augustine was raised up by God to restore it in a measure; and I doubt not but if he could now judge of the controversies of the present age, he would be decidedly with us.

With my whole heart, I pray to the eternal God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for his own and his Son's glory, he would collect together the eternal church by the voice of his gospel: and may he direct our wills by his Holy Spirit, and preserve in its purity that doctrine which he hath revived among us through the ministry of Martin Luther!

The Son of God himself prayed, Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." To this prayer of our High Priest we would add our own petitions,—That true religion may ever shine among us and direct our lives. These were the daily prayers of Luther; and continued to be so till his soul was called from his mortal body,—which took place without struggle in the sixty-third year of his age.

The reader has now before him the substance of a considerable part of Melancthon's account of Luther, written very soon after the death of that reformer. The known integrity, piety, and moderation of the writer render his preface to the second volume of Luther's Works peculiarly valuable. An exact translation was deemed unnecessary. It was thought best to condense the MATTER into as little room as possible, and not to interrupt the detail of the biographer by introducing any particulars from other authorities. The facts, which were already mentioned in

the preceding history, are in general omitted in these extracts. A trifling repetition sometimes could not well be avoided, and will be excused by the indulgent reader, on account of the instructive remark or opinion which accompanies it. The positive judgment and declaration of Melancthon, whenever they can be had, respecting the circumstances or events in which he himself was immediately concerned, cannot fail to be instructive.

But in this instance, as in many others, it has unfortunately happened that those passages of this little tract, which are most deeply practical, and which peculiarly relate to Luther's penitential convictions, and to his progress in spiritual understanding, during the earlier years of his religious course, have been almost entirely overlooked by historians and memorialists. The consequence has been, that certain precious fragments of the secret thoughts and practice of the reformer, though authentic beyond all dispute, are scarcely known among Protestants in general.—The pious and enlightened reader of every denomination will, no doubt, be gratified in seeing them brought forward and recorded here.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Melancthon, in another place, has given a very decided testimony to the talents of Luther.

"Pomeranus," says he, "is a grammarian, and explains the force of words; I profess logic; and teach both the management of the matter, and the nature of argumentation. Justus Jonas is an orator, and discourses with copiousness and elegance; but Luther is OMNIA IN OMNIBUS, complete in every thing; a very miracle among men; whatever he says, whatever he writes, penetrates their minds, and leaves the most astonishing stings in their hearts.

The same author assures us that he often found Luther at prayer, with vehemence and tears imploring God for the whole church. He daily set apart a portion of time for reading psalms, and for earnest supplication; and would often say, he was not pleased with those who, through indolence or a multiplicity of employments, contented themselves with mere sighs instead of actual prayers. Forms of prayer, he said, were prescribed to us by the will of God; that the reading of them might warm our affections, and that our voices might profess aloud the God whom we serve and implore."

The religious student of ecclesiastical history naturally finds himself interested in every event where Luther is materially concerned. This does not arise from curiosity alone. Much light is often thrown on the characters of eminent men, from a knowledge of their

* Melch. Adam.

conduct under peculiar or extraordinary circumstances, provided the facts be but stated with accuracy.

The various accounts of authors, respecting the immediate incidents, which determined Luther to retire from the world into a monastery,* agree in the main; but not precisely in every circumstance. It is very remarkable, that Melancthon, who speaks of the occasion of this sudden resolution, as a thing which was well known, and which he himself had heard Luther relate, is not only silent concerning any storm of thunder and lightning, but, as we have mentioned above, expressly says, he does not know by what accident Luther's companion was killed. The story of the thunder-storm appears also to have had little weight on the mind of Melchior Adamus.† Yet, from the very respectable evidence collected by Seckendorf and others, the most probable conclusion seems to be—

1. That Luther's companion was not killed by lightning, but murdered by some unknown person, who left him miserably bruised and wounded. His name is said to have been Alexius.

2. That Luther himself, while walking at a distance from house or town, was so alarmed by a storm of thunder, that he fell upon the ground, and in that situation made a sort of vow to lead a monastic life in future, if he should be delivered from the impending danger.

3. That he afterwards considered this vow as binding on his conscience, which was at that time in a remarkably tender state.

4. That soon after these events, which took place when he was about twenty-one years of age, he called together his particular friends and fellow-students, and entertained them in his usual way with music and a convivial treat; and when they had not the smallest suspicion of his intentions, he sought them to be cheerful with him that evening, for it was the last time, he said, they would ever see him in his present situation, as he had actually determined to begin the monastic life. In the morning he wrote farewell-letters to them; and sent his parents the ring and gown which belonged to him as Master of Arts; and at the same time he unfolded to them in writing the grounds of his resolution. They grieved excessively that so great talents should be buried in a state of almost non-existence. But for the space of a month nobody was admitted to speak to him.‡

INDULGENCES.

It may not be improper to mention the

• Page 666.

• Who wrote the Lives of the German Divines who promoted the Reformation.

• Seck. Luth. Ep. Melch. Adam.

following anecdote concerning Tetzl, the audacious vender of the papal indulgences.

When the emperor Maximilian was at Inspruck, he was so offended at the wickedness and impudence of Tetzl, who had been convicted of adultery, that he condemned him to death, and had intended to have him seized and put into a bag, and flung into the river Enoponte; but he was prevented by the solicitations of Frederic the elector of Saxony; who, fortunately for Tetzl, happened to be there at the time.⁷

Barnet informs us that the scandalous sale of pardons and indulgences had by no means so completely ceased in popish countries as is commonly taken for granted. He says, that in Spain and Portugal there is everywhere a commissary who manages the sale with the most infamous circumstances imaginable. In Spain the king, by an agreement with the pope, has the profits. In Portugal, the king and the pope go shares.

"In the year 1709 the privateers of Bristol took a galleon in which they found five hundred bales of bulls" for indulgences.... "and sixteen reams were in a bale. So that they reckon the whole came to 3,840,000. These bulls are imposed on the people, and sold, the lowest at three rials, a little more than twenty-pence, but to some at about eleven pounds of our money.... All are obliged to buy them in Lent." The author adds, "Besides the account given of this in the cruising voyage, I have a particular attestation of it by Captain Dampier."

Protestants in our times are not sufficiently aware of the evils from which, under the blessing of God, a great part of Europe has been delivered, by the rational, animated, and persevering exertions of Luther, his associates, and other early reformers.

GEO. SPALATINUS, page 668,—Appears to have been one of the most intimate friends of Luther. He was of all others the person, to whom the reformer, in his greatest difficulties and dangers, entrusted his most secret feelings and designs. Spalatinus by his good sense, his opportunity of easy access to the elector of Saxony, and his sincere attachment to Luther, was, on many occasions, useful to the cause of the reformation in general, as well as to his friend in particular.

A private epistolary correspondence between the two seems to have been frequent and uninterrupted during many years; and as the historian frequently refers to certain parts of it, which are extremely interesting, the following short account of Georgius Spalatinus himself may have its use.

He was a Franconian of considerable

learning and great discretion. He was about a year older than Luther, but appears not to have begun the study of divinity, with any degree of earnestness, till he was more than thirty years of age. He requested his friend to give him his advice concerning the best method of acquiring sacred knowledge. The answer of Luther on this occasion well deserves to be remembered and practised by every student in divinity. After recommending to his notice certain parts of the writings of Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, he exhorts him,—Always to begin his studies with "SERIOUS PRAYER; for, says he, there is really NO INTERPRETER OF THE DIVINE WORD, BUT ITS OWN AUTHOR. He adds, READ THE BIBLE IN ORDER FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END.

Luther, in his letters to Spalatinus, addresses him, sometimes as librarian, and sometimes as registry of the elector of Saxony, but he takes care, at the same time, to call him minister of Jesus Christ. In fact, Spalatinus was both secretary and privy-counsellor to the elector; he accompanied him to several German diets; and at his court, he preached and performed the duties of domestic chaplain.. A stronger proof of the high estimation in which he was supposed to be held by Frederic the Wise needs not to be adduced than that in the year 1519, the pope himself, Leo X. condescended to write a letter to his BELOVED SON, GEORGE SPALATINUS, in which, after acknowledging, in the most flattering terms, the great influence and weight which Spalatinus had with the elector, and how very much that prince valued the prudent and wholesome advice of his secretary, he exhorts him "in the Lord, and with his paternal authority requires him, to contribute every thing in his power to repress the detestable temerity of brother Martin Luther, that child of Satan, whose grievous heresy was spreading among the credulous people."

In the affairs of religion Spalatinus used all his influence to strengthen the party of Luther; but he was often so vexed and even dispirited on account of the little attention that was paid to his own ministerial exertions, that he seriously thought of quitting his situation at the elector's court.—Luther opposed this intention in the most animated and decisive terms.—Take care, said he, that you get the better of these thoughts which harass your mind, or, at least, learn to dismiss them. You must not desert the ministry of the word of God. Christ has called you to his service. Yield yourself to his good pleasure. At present you do not understand the importance of your situation; you will understand it better by and by. The desire you have to quit your post is a mere temptation; the reason of which we, who are spectators, see better than you do yourself. In a case of this sort, you should rather trust the judg-

ment of your friends than your own. We are the means, which, on this occasion, the Lord uses for your comfort and advice. We call God to witness, that in wishing you to continue in your vocation, we have no other object but his WILL and his GLORY. I consider it as a certain sign of your ministry being acceptable to God, that you are thus tempted. If it were otherwise, you would not be weary and deplore your unfruitfulness; you would rather bustle, and seek to please men, as those do who talk much, though they were never sent with a commission to preach the gospel.

On the same subject Luther writes thus :

You ask my advice, my dear Spalatinus, whether you should quit your situation at the elector's court. This is my opinion.—I own there is reason in what you allege. "The word of God is disregarded." And it is a wise rule, "not to pour out speeches where there is no attention." But I say, if there be ANY persons that love to hear, you should not cease to speak. I myself acted on the principle which I now recommend to you; otherwise I might long ago have been silent amidst this prodigious contempt of the word of God. Therefore I affirm, that unless you have some better reason, which lies heavy on your conscience, this perverse and unreasonable inattention of wicked men is not a sufficient cause for your leaving the court. Consider, of how much service you may be to many, from the weight of your influence with the prince, and from your long experience of the ways of courtiers. Whatever may be the abilities of your successor, Frederic the Wise will not trust him much, till time has furnished proofs of his integrity.—On the whole, I cannot so much as conceive any reason that will justify the step you speak of, but one, namely, marriage. Stay, therefore, where you are; or if do you depart, let a wife be the cause.

Spalatinus continued in his employments until his death, which happened in his grand climacteric, sixty-three, in the year of our Lord 1545. Great grief and depression of spirits are said to have hastened his end. There is extant a most judicious, consolatory, letter, which Luther wrote to him in the preceding year, and which gave him much comfort. Spalatinus, it seems, through ignorance or inadvertency, had consented to the illegal marriage of a clergyman of bad character; and the matter hung heavy on his mind. 1. Luther wisely cautions his friend against giving way to too much sorrow. He was well acquainted, he said, with the dreadful effects of it. He had felt those effects in his own case; and he had seen them in the cases of others. He instanced Melancthon, who fell into a most dangerous disease, owing to great grief.—2. He then takes up the case, at the worst, namely, on the sup-

position that Spalatinus had been really much to blame in the affair; and shows that still he ought not to despair of the grace of God, who was ready to pardon not only the slight faults, but the most grievous sins of the penitent. He tells him, that formerly he himself had been in a similar affliction of mind, which had brought him to the very edge of the grave; but that Staupitius had been of great use to him, by saying, "you are endeavouring to quiet your conscience by considering yourself as a slight, outward, superficial, sinner; but you ought to know that Jesus Christ is ready to save the greatest and the vilest of sinners."—3. Lastly, Luther, as a kind brother, exhorts him in the sweetest and most emphatical language to derive his comfort from a view of the gracious Redeemer.

Thus we find Luther always the same man. Exercised in the school of adversity he feels for others. Naturally tender and grateful, he loves his friends and administers every comfort in his power. His eye is always fixed on the next world: and the proper business of this life, with him, is the care of the soul. The account just given is an admirable specimen of his talents as a spiritual adviser.

How many, in a like case, through a mistaken affection, or through fear of giving offence to an aged, dying friend, would have contented themselves with saying nothing but "smooth things" concerning human infirmity, general sincerity, and the venial nature of sins of inadvertence, &c. ?

But Martin Luther, though behind no man in compassion and benevolence, kept two things constantly in mind,—the glory of the Redeemer; and the salvation of men's souls. Hence, on these subjects particularly, he always spoke without disguise.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROGRESS OF THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING INDULGENCES, TILL THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONFERENCES BETWEEN LUTHER AND CAJETAN.

TETZEL the dominican, alarmed at the publication of Luther's theses, opposed to them one hundred and six propositions, in which he attempted to refute the arguments of the Augustine monk; and not content with this, by virtue of his inquisitorial authority, he also directed Luther's compositions to be burnt. It appears from very authentic documents,^a that this shameless monk was an experienced veteran in the traffic of indulgences. He himself, in the year 1507, that

^a 14. XXX. 10.

^b Moller. Cron. Fribergens.

is, ten years before the present dispute with Luther, had collected at Friberg two thousand florins in the space of two days by the iniquitous sale of that article. The sale of indulgences, therefore, was no new thing in the papal system; and the instance before us proves, that, occasionally at least, the scandalous practice might be carried to a very great extent. It is, however, a relief to the indignant mind, to find that ecclesiastical history furnishes some few examples of pious Christians with enlightened understanding, who had bravely withstood the growing corruption. To mention one: John, bishop of Misnia, had effectually discharged from his own diocese the popish proclaimers of indulgences, who, like merchants, had been vending every where their certificates of pardon of sins, as if they were an ordinary commodity.^a He had blamed the people for foolishly putting their money into a chest, of which they had not the key; and had declared that, by reading the bible, he had discovered the apostolical religion to be very different from that which prevailed at present. This good prelate, a little before his death, happening to hear that Tetzel was again employed in a similar way, prophesied he would be the last of the dealers in indulgences, on account of his shameless audacity.^b Notwithstanding this, and every other warning or remonstrance, the Dominican commissioner persevered in the traffic with augmented industry; and so much incensed the minds of Luther's disciples at Wittenberg, that they ventured, by way of retaliation, to burn publicly his propositions, or theses,^c as they were called, with every mark of disapprobation and ignominy. Luther was much grieved at this rash action; and finding himself to be accused of instigating his follow-

ers to commit it, writes thus to a friend. "I wonder, you could believe, that I was the author of the deed. Think you that I am so destitute of common sense, as to stigmatize, in such a manner, a person in so high an office? I know better the rules of ecclesiastical subordination, and have more regard to my own character, both as a monk and as a theologian than to act so." There were also persons, who, pretending to be in possession of court intrigues, were fond of circulating the report, that Luther had published his theses by the secret instigations of the elector Frederic. Luther, with great concern, takes notice of this false surmise. In a letter to his friend Spalatinus he thus expresses his feelings. "I am heartily vexed at the scandalous report, which is diffused with much malignity,—namely,—that in all I do, I am only the ENGINE of our illustrious prince, for the purpose of disgracing the arch-bishop of Mentz. What do you think I ought to do on the occasion? Shall I open the matter to the elector? I am extremely concerned, that the prince should be suspected on my account, and I cannot bear the thought of being the origin of contention among persons of so great dignity."

Luther also published a sermon, preached against indulgences, which Tetzel answered, and this produced a reply from Luther. About the same time, Henry, duke of Brunswick, who was afterwards distinguished among the most active enemies of Lutheranism, appeared in the contest; and in a public writing accused Frederic of secretly supporting Luther. The well known character of the elector, for caution and prudence, seems however to have prevented the report from gaining much credit. This prince took extraordinary care not to involve himself unnecessarily in the concerns of Luther. Our intrepid reformer, in all his opposition to Tetzel, most certainly had no colleague or assistant; and he himself declared, that he never had conversed with the elector Frederic in his whole life.

Luther never did things by halves. Accordingly, as the affair of selling indulgences had laid firm hold of his mind, he could neither quiet his uneasiness, nor smother his indignation. He still continued to preach and to write on the same subject, till the end of the year 1517. In the next year he went to Heidelberg, and was courteously received by Wolfgang, the brother of the elector Palatine, who was the scholar of Oecolampadius, a name, afterwards renowned among the reformers. Luther had been advised by

empty, and at parting said: "This is the fault I intended to commit, and for which I have your absolution."

his humorous story may seem scarcely worthy of the dignity of history; but it is recorded by the cautious Seckendorf, and may serve to shew the almost incredible lengths to which the popish agents proceeded in the detestable traffic so clearly laid open by this anecdote.

^a Chytr. Lib. II.

^b "A soul," said Tetzel in his theses, "may go to heaven, in the very moments, in which the money is cast into the chest.—The man, who buys off his own sins by indulgences, merits more, than he who gives alms to the poor, unless it be in extreme necessity." Other extraordinary assertions are likewise contained in his tracts, which demonstrate that protestant writers have not misrepresented the controversy before us. Suffice it to mention two sentences more. "The ministers of the church do not barely declare men's sins forgiven, but do really pardon them by virtue of the sacraments, and by the power of the keys.—They may impose a punishment to be suffered AFTER DEATH; and it is better to send a penitent with a small penance into purgatory, than by refusing him absolution to send him into hell." Du Pin, B. II. Seck. Lib. I.

^c When Tetzel was at Leipzig, and had scraped together a great deal of money from all ranks of people, a nobleman, who suspected the imposture, put this question to him, "Can you grant absolution for a sin, which a man shall intend to commit in future?" "Yes," replied the frontless commissioner, "but on condition that the proper sum of money be actually paid down." The nobleman instantly produced the sum demanded; and in return, received a diploma sealed and signed by Tetzel, absolving him from the unexplained crime, which he secretly intended to commit. Not long after, when Tetzel was about to leave Leipzig, the nobleman made inquiry respecting the road he would probably travel, waited for him in ambush at a convenient place, attacked and robbed him; then beat him soundly with a stick, sent him back again to Leipzig with his chest

his friends not to go to Heidelberg on account of the danger to which he might be exposed. But, as a general assembly of the Augustinian monks had been called at that place, he thought it right to obey his superiors, whatever might be the event. The official business of the assembly was of no great moment; and therefore we need not be surprised that the zealous and active spirit of Luther was not content with barely discharging the duties of his order. A providential opportunity was offered of propagating Divine Truth, and it behoved him not to neglect it. While, therefore, he remained at this place, he wrote some propositions, in which he opposed the prevailing notions concerning justification, faith, and works. His capital object in them was to demonstrate the doctrine of justification, before God, by faith, and not by our works and deservings. The theses or positions, which he intended to defend, were publicly exposed to view in writing according to custom; and he called upon Leonard Bejer, a monk of the Augustinian order, to be his respondent. The professors of the university disapproved of the controversy; and therefore it was held in the Augustinian monastery. A large concourse of people attended, and a number of the learned bore a part in the disputation. Among the hearers were Martin Bucer, and John Brentius, men, afterwards eminent in the work of reformation. These and other persons, who in process of time became celebrated theologians, admired the acuteness, promptitude, and meekness of Luther, were struck with the truths of the gospel which were new to their ears, and desired further instruction of him in private. This was the seed-time of the gospel in the Palatinate; and these were the beginnings of the reformation in that electorate. Luther's disciples cultivated and taught the same doctrines in private, and after a time ventured to teach them publicly in the university.

While the cause of evangelical truth was thus making gradual advances in Germany, two celebrated Romanists, Eckius of Ingolstadt, and Prierias a Dominican, master of the sacred palace at Rome, took up their pens against the theses of Luther, who, by these means was led into a fresh literary contest. Luther published elaborate answers on all the disputed points; and managed this part of the controversy with so much moderation and gentleness, that his inimical historian Maimbourg, has no way left of reviling the man he dislikes, but by saying,—On this occasion, he acted “contrary to his natural disposition.” Let the reader infer the real disposition of Luther from authenticated facts, and not from the

insinuations of prejudiced papists. At this time, he wrote also to his own diocesan, and to his vicar-general. To his diocesan, the bishop of Brandenburg, he declared, that he did not determine, but dispute, using the liberty allowed to scholastic men in all ages. “I fear not,” says he, “bulls and menaces; it is the audaciousness and the ignorance of men, that induce me to stand forth, though with much reluctance: Were there not a weighty cause for it, no one, out of my own little sphere, should ever hear of me. If the cause I defend, be not the work of God, I would have nothing to do with it; let it perish. Let him alone have glory, to whom alone glory belongs.” He endeavoured to rouse the spirit of his vicar-general, thus: “When I first heard you say, ‘that true repentance begins with the love of righteousness and of God,’ the words made a deep and durable impression on my heart, as if they had come by a voice directly from heaven.” Hence, he said, he was filled with grief to see the true doctrine of repentance, superseded by indulgences. He expressed his great unwillingness to be drawn into the contest; but, being defamed as an enemy of the pope, he felt himself constrained to defend his own character. He, therefore, begged Staupitius to transmit his trifling writings, as he calls them, to pope Leo X., that they might speak for him at Rome. “Not,” says he, “that I would involve you in my dangers. I desire alone to stand the shock of the contest. Let Christ see to it, whether the cause be mine or his.” To the kind admonitions of my friends, who would warn me of danger, my answer is, “the poor man has no fears; I protest, that property, reputation, and honours, shall all be of no estimation with me, compared with the defence of truth.—I have only a frail body to lose, and that weighed down with constant fatigue. If, in obedience to God, I lose it through violence or fraud, what is the loss of a few hours of life? Sufficient for me is the lovely Redeemer and Advocate, my Lord Jesus Christ, to whose praise I will sing as long as I live.”

In a private letter of this kind, written to a friend much older than himself, and whom he honoured as his father, every candid person must see that Luther would open the genuine feeling of his soul. This single fact, therefore, is decisive against the constant, but groundless, assertion of his adversaries, “that he was secretly encouraged and supported in this perilous contest by Staupitius.” There is no doubt, that both his diocesan and his vicar-general valued him extremely for his talents and piety;—nor were either of them destitute of some evangelical light: The latter especially,—as we have seen,—had been serviceable to the young Augustine monk in his early conflicts of

¹ See end. 29. from a MS. of the Palatine Churches by Altlingius.

temptation. But neither the former, nor the latter, had the knowledge, the courage, the faithfulness of Luther.

His controversial writings, published in the year 1518, in explanation and support of the various doctrines he had advanced, are full of important matter, and very much lay open the real state of his mind at that time. And these writings also,—such was his regard for ecclesiastical discipline,—he thought proper to transmit both to his ordinary and to his vicar-general. Among many other positions maintained in them are the following: "That every true christian may become partaker of the grace of Christ without pontifical indulgences. A christian," says he, "may glory that in Christ he has all things; that all the righteousness and merits of Christ are his own by virtue of that spiritual union with him, which he has by faith: On the other hand; that all his sins are no longer his, but that Christ, through the same union, bears the burden of them. And this is the confidence of christians, this is the refreshment of their consciences, that by faith our sins cease to be ours judicially, because they are laid on him, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

"I was compelled," continues Luther, "in my conscience to expose the scandalous sale of indulgences. I saw some seduced by them into mischievous errors, others tempted into an audacious profaneness. In a word, the proclaiming and selling of pardons proceeded to such an unbounden licentiousness, that the holy church and its authorities became subjects of open derision in the public taverns. There was no occasion to excite the hatred of mankind against priests to a greater degree. The avarice and profligacy of the clergy had, for many years past, kindled the indignation of the laity. Alas! they have not a particle of respect or honour for the priesthood, except what solely arises from fear of punishment; and I speak plainly, unless their dislike and their objections be attended to and moderated, not by mere power, but by substantial reasons and reformations, all these evils will grow worse."

From these extracts^a the reader will be enabled to form his own judgment of Luther, as a divine, as a statesman, and as an honest man.—He wrote a letter to the pope himself, respecting the same transactions, in which he expresses himself in so dutiful and ceremonious a manner, and even in strains of such submissive and prostrate subjection, as sufficiently show, that at that time he was far from meditating a separation from the

church of Rome. Maimbourg himself appears to have very much felt the force of Luther's ingenious declarations and general conduct in these proceedings. He thinks, he probably might have been sincere in his professions of obedience to the Roman See, "because," says he, "it was so contrary to his nature to play the hypocrite for any considerable time together." The same author adds, "Whether he was really sincere, or not, his modest and plausible manner of expressing his doubts, procured him the approbation of many. He was looked on as an honest inquirer after truth who had detected the frauds of his adversaries, and, in that way, had unjustly brought upon himself the name of heretic."^b

The preceding detail of facts and observations unavoidably lead the mind to this conclusion. Luther was far advanced in evangelical knowledge, and appears to have been an experienced christian some time before he became known to the world. Yet was he still strongly wedded to the habits of superstition; and he slowly admitted the conviction of the antichristian character of the hierarchy. He dreaded the sin of schism: and the impetuous fire of his temper was perpetually checked by the admonitions of conscience, and by the fear of offending his Maker. In this singular character, there was certainly united an assemblage of qualities, rarely found together in the same person; in particular, the greatest caution in conduct with a temper remarkably ardent and choleric. Too often this last betrayed him into a blameable asperity of language, yet seldom does it seem to have influenced his measures or plans of action. The poet's simple, but sublime, description of one of his dramatic heroes,^c "he feared God, and he feared none besides,"—is eminently true of the Saxon theologian.

Whoever keeps in view the natural and religious dispositions of Luther, while he contemplates the critical situation of this reformer, during the suspense of his contest with the papal authorities, cannot fail to conclude, that he must have experienced great anxiety and even perturbation of mind in that memorable season. The precise nature of his feelings will be best understood from his own account of them, in a preface to the edition of his theses, which was published by himself many years after the termination of the dispute. "I permit," says he, "the publication of my propositions against indulgences for this reason,—that the greatness of the success may be attributed to God, and that I may not be axalted in mine own eyes. For, by these propositions, it will appear how

^a Maimb. p. 28. In Seck.

^b Regime in his Athaliah.

^c It is not necessary to enter into a detail of these propositions or theses, because the cause of indulgences has now no advocates in this country.

^s The extracts here given are almost literal translations. But every one, who has been used to the making of extracts, knows, that in many cases where a great deal is omitted for the sake of brevity, it is necessary to add a few words to prevent obscurities. This, however, should always be done with the greatest care, so as not to affect the sense.

weak and contemptible I was, and in how fluctuating a state of mind, when I began this business. I found myself involved in it alone, and as it were, by surprise. And when it became impossible for me to retreat, I made many concessions to the pope; not, however, in many important points; but, certainly, at that time I adored him in earnest. In fact, how despised, and wretched a monk was I then; more like a lifeless body than a human being! Whereas in regard to the pope, how great was his majesty! The potentates of the earth dreaded his nod. How distressed my heart was in that year,—1517,—and the following, how submissive my mind was to the hierarchy, not feignedly but really;—nay, how I was almost driven to despair through the agitations of care and fear and doubt, those secure spirits little know, who at this day insult the majesty of the pope with much pride and arrogance! But I, who then alone sustained the danger, was not so certain, not so confident. I was ignorant of many things, which now, by the grace of God, I understand. I disputed, and I was open to conviction. Not finding satisfaction in the books of theologians and canonists, I wished to consult the living members of the church itself. There were indeed some godly souls, who entirely approved my propositions, but I did not consider their authority as of weight with me in spiritual concerns. The popes, cardinals, bishops, and monks, were the objects of my confidence. I waited for divine instruction with such ardent and continued eagerness, and was so overloaded with cares, that I became almost stupid, or distracted: I scarcely knew when I was asleep, or when awake.—At length, after I became enabled to answer every objection that could be brought against me from the scriptures,—one difficulty still remained, and only one;—namely,—that the church ought to be obeyed. By the grace of Christ I, at last, overcame this difficulty also. Most certainly I had formerly a much greater veneration for the Roman church than those have, who at this day, with a perverse spirit of opposition, extol popery so exceedingly against me."

Let us now listen to a few sentences of Luther, written so late as the year 1545, that is, about twenty-eight years after the beginning of the dispute concerning indulgences.^b "Before all things I entreat you, pious reader, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, to read my writings with cool consideration, and even with much pity. I wish you to know, that when I began the affair of the indulgences at the very first, I was a monk, and a most mad papist. So intoxicated was I and drenched in papal dogmas that I would have been most ready at all times to murder or

assist others in murdering any person, who should have uttered a syllable against the duty of obedience to the pope. I was a complete SAUL; and there are many such yet. There were, however, and are now, others, who appear to me to adhere to the pope on the principles of Epicurus; that is, for the sake of indulging their appetites; when secretly they even deride him, and are as cold as ice, if called upon to defend the papacy. I was never one of these: I was always a sincere believer; I was always earnest in defending the doctrines I professed; I went seriously to work, as one who had a horrible dread of the day of judgment, and who, from his inmost soul, was anxious for salvation.

"You will find, therefore, in my earlier writings, with how much humility, on many occasions, I gave up very considerable points to the pope, which I now detest as blasphemous and abominable in the highest degree. This ERROR,—my slanderers call INCONSEQUENCY:—but you, pious reader, will have the kindness to make some allowance on account of the times and my inexperience. I stood absolutely alone at first; and certainly I was very unlearned and very unfit to undertake matters of such vast importance. It was by accident, not willingly or by design, that I fell into these violent disputes: I call God witness.

"In the year 1517, when I was a young preacher, and dissuaded the people from purchasing indulgences, telling them they might employ their time much better than in listening to the greedy proclaimers of that scandalous article of sale, I felt assured I should have the pope on my side; for he himself, in his public decrees, had condemned the excesses of his agents in that business.

"My next step was to complain to my own ordinary, and also to the archbishop of Mentz; but I knew not at that time that half of the money went to this last mentioned prelate, and the other half to the pope.—The remonstrances of a low, mean, poor, brother in Christ had no weight. Thus despised, I published a brief account of the dispute, along with a sermon in the German language on the subject of indulgences; and very soon after I published also explanations of my sentiments, in which, for the honour of the pope, I contended, that the indulgences were not entirely to be condemned, but that real works of charity were of FAR MORE CONSEQUENCE.

"This was to set the world on fire, and disturb the whole order of the universe. At once and against me single, the whole popedom rose!"—

It will be needless to proceed further with this extract: the account is in entire unison with the preceding one written many

^b Latin preface to the first volume of I

years before. The candid and ingenious acknowledgments and declarations contained in each of them cannot fail to affect the reader's mind, particularly as they were all made by our reformer long after the transactions to which they relate, and at times when disguise and misrepresentation could serve no imaginable purpose. A more complete answer to the unwarrantable censures of those, who accuse Luther of selfish motives in promoting the reformation, can scarcely be conceived.—But after all, the best use to be made of the information here given is, to admire and adore the providence and grace of that God, WHO IS WONDERFUL IN COUNSEL AND EXCELLENT IN WORKING.¹

While the literary contest was carrying on between Luther and his antagonists, there were at Rome those, who blamed the pope for not interesting himself in a controversy, which, by exciting a spirit of resistance, and producing divisions, daily increased in magnitude and importance, and which, in its termination, might prove extremely injurious to the authority of the Romish church. With how much indifference and contempt Leo X. at first beheld the ecclesiastical disputes in Germany, how indolent was the disposition of this pontiff, and how improvident he shewed himself in defending the papal jurisdiction,—all this appears in the strongest light from the absurd and careless answer which he is said to have given to Silvester Prierias,² when that zealous and learned Dominican shewed him some of Luther's heretical publications concerning indulgences. "BROTHER MARTIN," said he, "IS A MAN OF A VERY FINE GENIUS, and these squabbles are the mere effusions of monastic envy."—Prierias, however, undertook the support of the pontifical authority; but, in writing against the reformer, he managed the Romish cause with so much heat and imprudence, that the pope himself presently directed him to be silent in future." This writer, in the event, did much service to Lutheranism. In an affair, which required the utmost delicacy, he expressed his sentiments without the least caution or moderation; and exalted the pope's power even far beyond that of all general councils. Luther availed himself of the temerity of his adversary, and publicly exposed, with much severity, the odious doctrines which he had inculcated.

In the same year,—1518,—a rash author of a similar description, attacked Luther with all the virulence of an enraged and bigoted Roman catholic. This was Hogenstratus, a German Dominican inquisitor, who represented the growing heresy as now become incurable by any of the milder methods. Penal and compulsory remedies, he

said, were absolutely necessary; and he exhorted the pontiff, by means of the sword and fire, to deliver mankind from the detestable innovator."—"Many of the monks" joined in this clamour with incessant vociferation among the people. Scarcely a word came from their mouths, except,—heresy!—blasphemy!—schism!—"I relate," says Erasmus, "what I saw with my own eyes; and am convinced that no one thing tended more to dispose the people in Luther's favour, than this imprudent conduct of the clergy. His propositions concerning the indulgences were soberly stated;—and if THEY had but argued the points in dispute in the same cool way, these ruinous consequences would never have taken place."

At length the Roman pontiff was roused from his state of indolence and security. Not only the avaricious venders of indulgences vociferated against Luther, as Demetrius and the silversmiths did against St. Paul, when their craft was in danger,³ but, from all quarters, complaints of the progress of heresy were sent to Rome. Even the emperor Maximilian I. represented to the pope, how necessary his interference was become. The Augustine monk, he said, was disseminating heretical and destructive doctrines, was obstinate in adhering to his opinions, and active in propagating them; and he had made many converts, even among persons of rank and distinction.⁴

The imprudence of Leo X., at this critical moment, may seem almost the consequence of judicial infatuation. At once he passed from the extremes of neglect and indifference to those of tyrannical violence and blind temerity. He ordered Luther to appear at Rome within sixty days to answer for himself before certain judges, of whom his antagonist Silvester Prierias was appointed one. Our reformer took the wisest method to protect himself against the impending storm. He instantly sent an account of the pope's citation to his friend Spalatinus, who was then with the elector Frederic at the diet of Augsburg; and in the strongest terms requested that, through the interposition of the prince, his cause might be heard in Germany and not at Rome. Frederic the Wise understood the arts and practice of the court of Rome, and was convinced of the propriety, and even the necessity of seconding Luther's wishes.—Accordingly he urged the competency of a German tribunal in an ecclesiastical controversy of that nature; and it seems entirely owing to the address, the penetration, and the firmness of this great prince, that the Roman pontiff at last consented, that cardinal Cajetan, who was then his legate at

¹ Isaiah xxviii.

² Prierias was master of the sacred palace, and general of his order. He died of the plague in 1523.

³ Erasmus. Epist.

⁴ Maimb. p. 38.

⁵ Erasmus. Epist.

⁶ Acts xlix. 24.

⁷ Maximilian's Letter. Op. Luth. Vol. I.

Augsburg, should take cognizance of the matter. If the delinquent showed proper marks of penitence and submission, he was to be kindly received again into the bosom of the church; but if he refused to appear before his appointed judge, the legate was commissioned then to denounce publicly, against him and his adherents, all the thunders and anathemas of papal indignation.*

Leo X., perceiving how great a favourite Luther was with the elector of Saxony, judged it expedient, by all the means in his power, to secure the support and concurrence of that prince in an affair, which he had now begun to consider as of the greatest moment. For this purpose, he acquainted Frederic, in a polite and affectionate, but very artful epistle, of the measures which he had been compelled to adopt, through the disobedience of an Augustine monk, whose very "order and profession should have perpetually reminded him of the duties of humility and obsequiousness." He styles Luther a son of iniquity, a prevaricator, who boasts of the protection of the elector, but, in fact, reverences no superior whatever. I know, says the pope, he has no ground for representing you as one, who encourages and supports him; nevertheless I exhort you in the Lord, and as you would preserve the reputation and dignity of a good catholic prince, to be on your guard, lest the lustre of your highly honoured ancestors should be in any degree tarnished by this calumny. I know of no blame respecting you; but I would wish you to avoid the very suspicion of blame, in which the rashness of this man may involve you. He then proceeds,—As many learned and religious persons, and in particular, our beloved son, Prierias, the master of our sacred place, have informed us of the heretical proceedings of Martin Luther, we have ordered him to be called upon to answer for himself; and for this purpose, we have given **EXPLICIT DIRECTIONS** to cardinal Cajetan, our legate.—Lastly, he concludes with a strong exhortation and injunction;—that Frederic, in virtue of the holy obedience which he owed to the Roman church, should contribute his utmost to secure the person of Luther, and deliver him up to the power of the holy See: he declared, however at the time, that if he was found innocent, he should be dismissed in peace and in favour; and even if he was guilty, he would exercise clemency towards him largely upon his repentance.†

It is well worthy of notice that, in this epistle, the pope suppresses a very material fact, namely, that Luther had, already and without trial, been condemned at Rome, as a heretic, by the bishop of Ascoli, the audi-

tor of the apostolic chamber. This clearly appears from the pope's own **ANNUAL**, which he sent to cardinal Cajetan along with the above mentioned directions; and the poor persecuted monk, in his writings, makes several pertinent observations upon the occasion: The pleasantest thing of all, says he, is this,—The pope's **ANNUAL** is dated August the twenty-third.—I was cited and admonished on the seventh of August, to appear at Rome, within sixty days. Thus it is very plain, that, either before the citation was delivered to me, or at most within sixteen days after, the bishop of Ascoli proceeded against me, judged me, and pronounced me an incorrigible heretic. If I should ask, what are become of the sixty days mentioned in the citation delivered to me, which are to be reckoned from the seventh of August, and would end about the seventh of October? Is it the usage of the pope's court to cite, admonish, accuse, judge, condemn, and pronounce sentence,—all on the same day,—and especially, when the supposed culprit is at a considerable distance, and totally ignorant of the proceedings? Again, how can they charge me with having abused the pope's kindness, and with persevering obstinately in heresy?—Would they be able to give any other answer to these questions than that, when they fabricated the falsehoods respecting me, they had lost their memory, and stood in need of a few doses of belladonna.

The condemnation of Luther at Rome, previous to his examination before Cajetan, was so important a fact, and implied so much violence and animosity in Leo and his advisers, that it may well be doubted whether our reformer, intrepid as he was, if he had been acquainted with all the circumstances of his disgrace and danger, would have ventured to have appeared at all at Augsburg. It is clear from one of his letters to Spalatinus,† that on his return from that place, he first learnt at Nuremburg the nature and extent of the papal commission to the cardinal,—namely, that already being pronounced a pertinacious heretic, his person was to be secured and kept in safety, till further orders for his removal to Rome.

The elector of Saxony conducted himself throughout this difficult transaction with the most extraordinary discretion.—He was determined not to permit Luther to be sent to Rome, where he would be at the mercy of his enraged adversaries; but, for the purpose of carrying this point the more easily, and also in the hope that an accommodation might take place with the Roman See, he promised the pope's legate, that he would take effectual care to place the supposed heretic before him, for examination, at Augsburg. We have observed indeed, that it was part of the pope's instructions to Cajetan, to

* The pope's directions to Cajetan, Luther, Op. vol. i.

† Pope's letter to the elector of Saxony, Tom. I. Witz. p. 204.

• Lib. I. *apud*.

shew every kindness to Luther provided he came voluntarily to confess his fault and sue for pardon; but,—what was to be done in case he should refuse, which was the thing by far the more probable to happen? Luther himself in his account of this matter says, "Every thing, I doubt not, would have been settled in the most peaceable and affectionate manner, if I would but have written down six letters, *REVOCO, I RECANT.*"

Frederic provided for the safety of his favourite Luther in the following manner.—He gave him letters of recommendation to the senate and principal inhabitants of Augsburg; who, instantly on his arrival, exhorted him not to appear before the cardinal, till he had obtained a promise of safe conduct from the emperor, who was then hunting at some distance from the city. Through the influence of these same persons, this important request of safe conduct was granted; and after three days the emperor's council announced to the cardinal, that the public faith was pledged to Luther, and therefore he must take no violent steps against him. The cardinal answered, "It is very well, nevertheless I shall do my duty."

Luther informs us, that, during those three days, he was constantly pressed by a very troublesome emissary of Cajetan to recant. If I would but recant, he said, all would be right. He further relates a curious conversation which took place between himself and this emissary. He came on the third day and expostulated as follows:

Why will you not go to the cardinal; he is waiting to receive you in the kindest manner?

I must listen to the advice of those excellent persons to whom I am recommended by the elector; and they tell me, I must by no means go to him till I have obtained the public faith. The moment THAT is obtained, I am ready to go.

What,—said he, evidently in much agitation,—Do you think that prince Frederic will take up arms on your account?

It is very far from my wish.

Where do you mean to stay?

In the open air.

Pray, suppose you had the pope and his cardinals all in your power, what would you do with them?

I would treat them with the greatest respect and honour.

So; said he, waving his hand in the Italian manner, and went away, and returned no more.

A short time before these transactions at Augsburg, the celebrated Melancthon had been received, as Greek professor at the university of Wittemberg, in the twenty-second

year of his age. The lectures of this truly learned and good man, together with those of Luther, were attended by crowds of students: and the university of Leipsic, a city wholly under Roman influence, on account of the principles of its sovereign, George of Saxony,—declined in its lustre. The consequence was, that Luther became still more odious to the hierarchy. Add to this, his defence of his theses, and a sermon, against the abuses of officials in excommunications, just published, had exasperated his adversaries to the highest degree.—We learn, from his letters to Staupitius and Spalatinus, what were the feelings and reflections of our hero at this alarming conjuncture.—To the former he said, "doubt not but I mean to be free in searching and handling the word of God. These citations and menaces move me not."—To the latter he writes thus: "From the bottom of my heart, I wish not to involve the elector in my perils. There is but one thing, which I hope he may be able to do for me,—namely, to prevent any violence on my person. And if he cannot do even that conveniently, I would have all the danger to be my own.—What I have undertaken to defend, I trust, I shall defend effectually. It may be found necessary to pay some regard to self-preservation, but a regard to truth is paramount to every consideration."—This is the language of one who was well instructed in Christian principles, and knew the practice of holy men in the purest times.

Certainly, at first, Luther seems to have doubted whether he should not be guilty of an unjustifiable temerity, in stirring a single step towards Augsburg, without the previous grant of a safe conduct. But, his scruples were done away by the generous behaviour of the elector. This excellent prince not only gave him the above-mentioned letters of recommendation, but also furnished him with money for his journey; informed him, by Spalatinus, that he might proceed to Augsburg, without need of a safe conduct,—such was the legate's benevolent intentions towards him;—and encouraged him to believe that, whatever might happen, he would not permit him to be dragged to the papal tribunal at Rome. It is most probable, however, that Frederic the Wise, either foresaw the effect which his letters of recommendation would produce at Augsburg, or had otherwise secretly provided that the public faith should be engaged for the persecuted reformer. He was a prince, says Luther, "of incredible capacity and penetration, and was accustomed to take effectual measures for disconcerting the Romanists, long before they entertained the least suspicion that he was aware of their designs. It was

much against the inclination of Cajetan, that the emperor Maximilian granted a safe conduct on this occasion. That irritated legate wrote to Frederic, and in much anger informed him, that he had expressly told the imperial council he would not have the name of Cajetan mentioned in that part of the transaction."² He is usually called Cajetan, though his real name was Thomas de Vio, of the town of Cajeta. He is allowed by Luther himself to have been naturally a man of a benevolent temper. Yet the choosing of this cardinal for the purpose of recoupling matters must not be produced as an example of discretion in Leo X. Thomas de Vio was excessively superstitious, and also entertained the most lofty ideas of papal authority. He wrote a book on the power of the Roman pontiff, which is said to have procured for him the archbishopric of Palermo and a cardinal's hat. Add to all this, he was a Dominican, and consequently the declared enemy of Luther, and the friend of Tetzel. Such a person was ill fitted to sit as judge or arbitrator in this nice and perilous controversy.

At the first interview, Luther prostrated himself before the cardinal, and was courteously received. But, at the same time, he was required to retract his errors,—to avoid them in future,—and to abstain from every thing, which might disturb the peace of the church. And these three things were stated expressly to be the order of the most holy pope. Luther desired that he might be permitted to see the pope's BRIEF. But this request was peremptorily refused.³

The heaviest charge against him seems to have been, that he had transgressed the bull of Clement VI., which had defined the nature and extent of indulgences; and it may easily be conceived, with how much indignation the cardinal would hear the defence of Luther,—namely,—that the Holy Scriptures, which he could produce in support of his own doctrines, had abundantly more weight with him than a pontifical bull, which in fact proved nothing, but merely recited the opinion of Thomas Aquinas. Cajetan, in answer, exalted the authority of the pope above all councils, above the church,

and even above the scriptures themselves. To this Luther opposed the appeal of the university of Paris, whose reputation had always stood high, as the parent of science, and the defender of the purest christianity.—Cajetan, in a rage, declared that the Parisians would meet with due punishment; and that Gerson,⁴ whose writings Luther had quoted, was DAMNED together with all his followers. So extravagantly high were the ideas of papal power conceived by this cardinal, that even the very moderate contradiction, given in France to the pontiff, appeared in his eyes an unpardonable sin. Little did he then imagine how much more openly his magnificent lord and master was to be opposed within the short space of a few months.

Frowns and menaces were by no means adapted to intimidate the determined mind of the Saxon reformer. He continued to insist on the authority of scripture. He owned he might have erred, but he thought it reasonable that his errors should be pointed out, on scriptural grounds, before he should be required to retract.

When Luther found, that not the smallest progress was made by conversation with the cardinal, and that all his fine promises of kind treatment amounted precisely to this, "you must either recant, or suffer punishment," he wisely determined to commit his answers to writing. In so doing, says he, the oppressed find comfort in two ways; in the first place, what is written, may be submitted to the judgment of others; and in the second, one has a better opportunity of working upon the fears and the conscience of an arrogant despot, who would otherwise overpower one by his imperious language.⁵

Agreeably to this resolution, he appeared before the cardinal with a notary and witnesses, repeated his protestations of general obedience to the church, and his perfect readiness to recant any error of which he could be convicted. Cajetan replied with so much acrimony, that the accused monk had no opportunity of explaining or of vindicating his sentiments. He absolutely refused to dispute with Luther either in public, or in private; he would not even consent that a single word of his own answers should be put down in writing. He continued to press for a recantation.

Staupitius, who was present at the scene, and who hitherto had acted the part of a steady friend of Luther, rose up, and intreated the legate to permit the accused to return his answers at length in writing. To which request, he, with great difficulty, at last acceded.

At the next conference, Luther exhibited

² Epist. Cajet. ad Sax. duc. Father Paul, C. Trent. B. I.

³ This important circumstance is not taken notice of by the ecclesiastical historians; though I find Luther himself in his celebrated letter to the elector of Saxony, written after the conference with Cajetan, uses the words "nam exemplar brevium potius denegabat Dominus Legatus. It is easy enough to understand why the legate, who was affecting to treat Luther with the greatest kindness, should not choose to show him a BRIEF, in which it appeared, that, at that very moment, he stood condemned as a heretic at Rome, though he had never been heard. On a view of all the circumstances, it seems by no means improbable, that the cardinal, pursuant to his instructions, was intending to make the poor heretic a prisoner, notwithstanding the emperor's promise of safe conduct. But a sight of the BRIEF could not have failed to alarm and put on his guard any man in so critical a situation.

⁴ The reader will remember, that this celebrated chancellor of the university of Paris, maintained, at the council of Constance, the superiority of a general council over the pope.

⁵ Luther's letter to Fred.

his written explanation and defence, which the cardinal treated with the greatest contempt. He told him, he had filled his paper with passages of scripture, which were irrelevant, and in general, that his answers were those of a perfect idiot. He condescended, however, to say, he would send them to Rome. Lastly, he ordered Luther to depart, and to come no more into his sight, unless he was disposed to recant.

Notwithstanding this rough treatment, it was Luther's firm opinion, that it would have given the cardinal great pleasure to have heard him recant. It may be thought some confirmation of this sentiment, that, in the evening of the very day in which this last conference took place, he sent for the vicar-general Staupitius, and desired him to persuade his young monk to retract. Staupitius promised to do his utmost. "You must answer his scriptural arguments," said Cajetan. Staupitius replied ingenuously, "That is above my power. I am his inferior both in capacity and in knowledge of the scriptures."

Throughout this whole conference at Augsburg, cardinal Cajetan appears to have been conscious how ill qualified he was to enter the lists with Luther, as a disputant in theological questions. Indeed the doctrines of the gospel, as far as we can judge, gave him little concern. His anxiety was, how he might best ensure obedience to the pontifical mandates. He inquired not whether these mandates were reasonable or repugnant to scripture, it was sufficient for him to know that they were the dictates of a pope. —The decretal of pope Clement VI., which he urged with so much heat and positiveness against Luther in the dispute respecting indulgences, maintained that,—"One drop of Christ's blood being sufficient to redeem the whole human race, the remaining quantity, that was shed in the garden and upon the cross, was left as a legacy to the church, to be A TREASURE FROM WHENCE INDULGENCES were to be drawn and administered by the Roman pontiffs."^b The Augustine monk had, for some time past, been too much enlightened to digest such wild superstitious inventions; and the man, who could call upon him, upon these grounds, to renounce his errors, was not to be reasoned with. Still it required extraordinary courage to deliver in a formal protest against the belief of tenets, which at that time were both established by the highest authority, and also supposed to have been dictated by an infallible judgment.

Some objections were made to Luther's ideas of justification by faith, but Cajetan did not scruple to confess,—that, if he would but have retracted his opposition to the in-

dulgences, all other differences might have been composed in an amicable manner; and that his opinions concerning the efficacy of faith in justification and in the sacrament admitted of being modified and interpreted, so as to be inoffensive. When Staupitius was informed of this circumstance, he expressed a wish, that the cardinal had avowed that sentiment in the presence of the notary and the witnesses; because then, said he, there would have been clear proof that, at Rome, MONEY was held in greater estimation than FAITH.

Luther, on the contrary, considered the scripture-doctrine of justification by faith as of infinite importance. He declared, that he would rather retract every thing which he had said upon other subjects, than THAT which he must adhere to with his dying breath. That in regard to indulgences, their intrinsic nature, whatever it might be, could not be altered by ostentatious praises and honours, but that if he gave up the article of justification by faith, he should, in fact, deny Jesus Christ himself. That, though the cardinal had promised to conduct the inquiry according to the sacred scriptures, and the rules of the church, he had not produced a single text of scripture against him, nor any one authority from the holy fathers. Lastly, that he was confident no answer could ever be given to the scriptural arguments and the authorities, which he had produced in support of the doctrine in question.^c Our peace, says he, consists in coming to Christ in lively faith: If a man believe not the promise, he may practise confession to all the world, and he may be absolved a thousand thousand times even by the pope himself, but he will never obtain, on good grounds, a quiet conscience.^d

It was on Friday the fourteenth of October 1518, that Luther made his last appearance before the pope's legate. A report was spread that, notwithstanding the engagement of a safe conduct, he was to be seized and confined in irons. He remained, however, at Augsburg till the succeeding Monday. He heard nothing from the cardinal. How great must have been his anxiety! —On the Monday, by a letter couched in the most respectful terms, he begged pardon for any irreverent or unbecoming language towards the pontiff, which might have escaped him in the heat and hurry of the debate; he even promised to desist from treating the subject of indulgences any more, provided his antagonists were enjoined to observe a similar silence. But to retract his sentiments or give up the truth, he absolutely refused. He said, his conscience would not permit him to act in that manner. He acknowledged that his friends, and especially his vicar-general,

^b Maculaine in Meuseheim, Vol. II. Chap. II.

^c Epist. ad Fred.

^d Resolut. de Indulg.

had taken great pains to make him think humbly, submit his own opinion, and form a right judgment: But, said he, neither the favour nor the advice, nor the command of any man ought ever to make me do or say what is contrary to my conscience.—To this letter he received no answer.

On the next day he sent another letter to Cajetan, expressed in more spirited language and nearer to his usual strain. "He conceived he had done every thing which became an obedient son of the church. He had undertaken a long and dangerous journey; he was a man of a weak body, and had very little money to spend. He had laid the book, which contained his opinions, at the feet of his holiness the pope; he had appeared before his most reverend father the cardinal; and he was now waiting to be instructed how far he was right in his opinions, and how far wrong.—It could no longer serve any good purpose to spend his time there, and be a burden to his friends. He was really in want of money. Besides, the cardinal had told him, *viva voce*, to come no more into his sight, unless he would recant:—and said Luther, "In my former letter I have distinctly pointed out all the recantation I can possibly make." He then signified his positive determination to leave the place; but not before he had formally appealed from the pope's legate, nay from the pope himself "ill informed to the same most holy Leo X. that he might be better informed." In prosecuting this appeal he confessed that he had acted rather from the judgment of some persons of distinction than from his own. If he had been left entirely to himself, he should have thought an appeal unnecessary in this case. He wished to refer every thing to the determination of the church. What could he do more? He was not a contentious adversary, but a tractable scholar. Even the elector Frederic, he knew, would be better pleased with his appeal than his recantation. He therefore besought the cardinal to consider both his departure and his appeal as the effect of necessity and of the authority of his friends. They said, WHAT, will you retract? Is YOUR retraction to be the rule of our FAITH? If any thing which you have advanced, is to be condemned, let the church decide, and do you obey.—This reasoning, in his mind, was irresistible.

Luther waited four whole days,—reckoning from the day of his dismissal by the cardinal;—and still received no further orders. The suspense was extremely afflicting; and both himself and his friends began to suspect that this TOTAL SILENCE portended violence to his person. To prevent being seized and imprisoned, he quitted Augsburg very early in the morning of the nineteenth

* Some historians say, this happened on the 20th of

of October 1518. A friendly senator ordered the gates of the city to be opened, and he mounted a horse, which Stappitum had procured for him. He had neither boots nor spurs, nor sword; and he was so fatigued with that day's journey, that when he descended from his horse, he was not able to stand, but fell down instantly among the straw in the stable.* He had, however, taken care before his departure, that every thing relative to his appeal, should be done in a proper manner and in the presence of a notary public.

Such was the conclusion of the conferences at Augsburg, in which the firmness and plain dealing of Luther was no less conspicuous than the unreasonable and impetuous behaviour of the cardinal.

Whatever might be the cause of that SILENCE for several days, on the part of Cajetan, which our reformer and his friends beheld with so much just suspicion and jealousy; whether the legate still hoped to bring the affair to a happy termination by the milder methods of influence and persuasion; or whether his ambiguous conduct is best explained on the supposition that he was intending to seize the person of Luther, but did not dare to proceed to extremities, in defiance of the imperial grant of safe conduct, without further orders from the Roman See;—on almost every imaginable view of his motives, it seems natural to conclude that he must have been much mortified at the sudden departure of Luther. He had neither punished the heretic nor reduced him to submission. The court of Rome would probably be highly displeased when they heard of his escape; and in their disappointment would be apt to forget the difficult circumstances under which the cardinal acted, and to attribute both the present and the consequent mischiefs to his bad management. In fact, as soon as the events at Augsburg were known at Rome, the pope's legate was blamed exceedingly for his severe and illiberal treatment of Luther at the very moment, it was said, when he ought to have promised him great riches, a bishopric, or even a cardinal's hat.†

Cajetan, no doubt, understood the disposition of the court of Rome sufficiently to foresee how harsh a construction would be put upon his conduct in a business, which had terminated so unfavourably to their wishes and expectations. In the bitterness of his heart he complained to the elector of Saxony of Luther's insolent and insincere

October, others on the 19th, but I think Luther's own account of the proceedings at Augsburg show that he must have left that city on the 19th. It is unnecessary to trouble the reader further respecting a matter of so little consequence.

† Tom. I. A. 15th. p. 150.

Paul Sarpi says, what is not at all improbable,—that Luther had John Huse's case in his head. s. Father Paul.

behaviour; and even reproached his Highness for supporting such a character. He said, that he had conversed for many hours privately with Staupitius, and one or two more learned friends respecting this business; that his object had been to preserve the dignity of the apostolic See without disgracing BROTHER MARTIN, and that when he had put matters into such a train, as to have reasonable hopes of the success of his plan, he had found himself completely deluded. Martin, his several associates, and his vicar-general, had suddenly disappeared. Martin indeed had written letters, in which he pretended to beg pardon, but he had retracted not one word of the scandalous language he had used. Lastly, Cajetan warned the prince to consider, how much he was bound in honour and in conscience, either to send brother Martin to Rome or to banish him from his dominions. As to himself, he said, he had washed his hands of so pestilential a business, but his Highness might be assured the cause would go on at Rome. It was too important to be passed over in silence;^a and he intreated him not to sully the glory of himself and his illustrious house for the sake of a paltry mendicant monk.

Every pious reader will lament the effect which these turbulent and contentious scenes produced upon the mind of the venerable Staupitius. It should seem, that partly an apprehension of danger, and partly his private conversation with cardinal Cajetan, influenced this good man to leave his friend, withdraw all further opposition to the popedom, and retire to Salzburg. Our more determined and adventurous reformer did not hesitate to tell him, that "he stuck fast between Christ and the pope."^b Let us hope, however, that this judgment of Luther was of the harshest sort; and that, in passing it, sufficient allowances were not made for the different tempers and ages of men and for inveterate habits.

Two reasons induce me to conclude with certainty that Staupitius acted towards Luther with perfect faithfulness at Augsburg. First, it is beyond all dispute, that he affronted Cajetan by leaving that place suddenly and without taking leave;—which he would never have done, if he had betrayed his friend by dishonourably entering into any plans for seizing his person. Secondly, by way of encouraging the persecuted monk in his difficult circumstances he used this language to him, "Remember, my brother, you undertook this business in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Luther himself, three years afterwards, owned these precious words "sunk deep into his mind." The truth is, this reverend vicar-general was a man of a timid temper, and well advanced in years;

also his views of the gospel were far from being bright or distinct; and lastly the prospect of peace with the hierarchy,—at least at Wittenberg,—was extremely gloomy.

Moreover, we cannot doubt but the pope's legate, in his private conversation with Staupitius, would use both conciliatory and threatening language. Each would tend to shake the resolution of such a man. And besides the direct and immediate effect of that conversation on the mind of the timorous vicar-general, we may fairly trace some other important consequences to the same origin. While he was agitated with the discussion, and perhaps yielding to the legate's menaces and advice, he exhorted his less pliable monk to exhibit to his superiors some plainer marks of obedience and humility. The firm temper of Luther, which had resisted the imperious dictates of a haughty cardinal, instantly relented under the entreaties of a mild and affectionate friend. Hence that submissive letter, which our reformer wrote to Cajetan^a on Monday the seventeenth of October; and hence those apologies and concessions which are contained in it, to the very limit of what his conscience would permit. Probably no part of his own conduct, on a review of the proceedings at Augsburg, would afford him less satisfaction than this; and though Luther never reproached Staupitius for having recommended so extremely injudicious and suppliant a measure, yet the latter might possibly observe in the former some dissatisfaction on that account; and, at any rate, he could not fail to be convinced from many circumstances, that his own disposition was not calculated, like that of his friend, to encounter such difficulties and hazards as were likely to arise in a righteous and determined opposition to the popedom. These considerations may help further to explain, why it might not be disagreeable to Staupitius to remove from Wittenberg, and thereby avoid the dangerous fellowship, and importunities of a man who, in his opinion, was apt to be impetuous and turbulent in his public conduct.

But perhaps the circumstance, which may be thought most unfavourable to the reputation of Staupitius, is,—that, in the year 1523, we find him preferred to an abbacy at Salzburg. Luther's affectionate regard and veneration for his vicar-general, restrained him from saying any thing harsh or severe on this occasion, but he could not dissemble his doubts and anxieties respecting the consequences of this preferment. We will conclude this chapter with two valuable extracts of his letters. The first is dated 1522, and is in answer to a letter received from Staupitius at a time, when Luther had heard an unfounded rumour that his friend was actually made an abbot.

^a *Luth. Op.* vol. i. The letter is dated Oct. 23, 1510.
^b *Lib. I. ep.*

"The report of your being made an abbot is so general, that if I had not received your own letter in contradiction, I must have been compelled to believe it. It is, I suppose, in the same way that you receive UNTRUTHS concerning me. May the Providence of God attend you! but, I confess, my plain understanding does not point out to me, how it can be advisable for you to accept an abbacy at this time. I would not, however, interfere with your judgment. One thing I entreat you, by the bowels of Christ, not readily to believe those who calumniate me. In regard to what you inform me,—that my doctrines are the delight of debauchees, and that many scandalous practices have been the consequence of my recent publications, I am neither afraid of such censorious representations, nor surprised to hear of them. Certainly I have laboured, and am labouring, that the pure WORD of God may be spread abroad without tumult. But you know that I am not master of events. My object has been to attack, by means of the written word, that system of impieties, which hath been introduced in opposition to sound doctrine. The abominations, my father, the abominations of the pope with his whole kingdom must be destroyed. And the Lord does this 'without hand,' by the word alone. The subject exceeds all human comprehension; and therefore we need not wonder that great commotions, scandals, and even prodigies should arise. Let not these things disturb you, my father. I cherish the best hopes. The counsel and the stretched out arm of God is plain in this matter. Remember how my cause, from the very first, gave the highest offence to the world, and yet it hath continually prevailed. Satan feels his wound: hence he rages the more, and endeavours to throw all into confusion."

The second letter, dated 1523, is addressed to the reverend abbot of St. Peter's in Salzburg.

"Reverend father, your silence is unkind. But though I cease to find favour in your eyes, I ought never to forget you, through whose means, the light of the gospel first dawned in my heart. I must tell you the truth,—It would have been more agreeable to me, if you had not been appointed an abbot; but since it is so, let neither of us interfere with our respective rights of private judgment. Your best friends are sorry for your leaving us, but still much more sorry that you are so near the infamous cardinal Langius, and that you will be compelled to bear in silence all his outrageous behaviour. I shall wonder if you are not in danger of denying Christ.—We still hope the best of you, though your long silence disheartens us. If you are become another man,—which may

Christ forbid!—I speak plainly, I shall throw away no more words, but have recourse to prayer, that God may be pleased to show mercy upon you, and us all. You observe, reverend father, who doubtfully I express myself. The reason is, your long silence leaves us ignorant of the disposition of your mind; whereas you very well know our most sacred thoughts and wishes. Permit me however to speak positively on one point,—We are confident, that we are not really objects of your contempt, even though you should dislike all our proceedings.—I shall not cease to pray that you may be as much estranged from the popedom, as I am at this moment, and, indeed, as you were formerly. May the Lord hear me, and take you and us to himself."

These letters may deserve the readers diligent consideration. They throw light on the general character both of the writer and of his friend: they intimate an evident progress of knowledge, in Luther's mind, respecting the nature of the papacy, which took place between the years 1518, and 1523: they manifest the strength of divine grace, which enabled him to withstand that threatening storm which alarmed Staupitius, and drove him into a dishonourable shelter; and lastly, they compel the mind to entertain painful fears and conjectures respecting the perfect uprightness of the new abbot of Salzburg, however we may be inclined to indulge cheerful hopes, that at the last day he will be found not to have gone the length of actually denying his Lord and Master.

Staupitius enjoyed his abbacy only for a very short time. He died in the year 1524.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONTROVERSY CONTINUED. THE ATTEMPTS OF MILTITZ AND OF ECKIUS.

THE condition of Luther after his return to Wittenberg, was peculiarly afflictive. Before himself he saw the total ruin of his worldly circumstances, the hardships of poverty and of exile, and the fear of a violent death from papal vengeance. He was not without hope of the protection of the elector, partly from the well known justice and humanity of that prince's character, and partly from the good offices of his secretary Spalatinus. Moreover, as yet, the interference of Frederic in the ecclesiastical controversy had not only been firm and discreet, but also as spirited and friendly, as could reasonably be expected in behalf of one who was looked on by the hierarchy as a turbulent and an abandoned heretic. Still it behoved our reformer not to be over con-

silent in his expectations of future support. He had abundant cause to be thankful for the past exertions of his prince, which had been found so useful and effective; but trying times were coming on apace. Every day the contest grew more and more perilous. Luther himself had a single eye to the prosperity of the kingdom of Christ; but he could not be answerable for the zeal or the perseverance of others: he was well acquainted with the human heart; and he foresaw that political and secular concerns might clash with the interests of the gospel. He would not wonder if the love of many began to wax cold; even his much esteemed friend Staupitius had already quitted Saxony; and, though the elector had hitherto manfully defended him against the tyrannical machinations of the court of Rome, it might well be doubted whether the chief motives of this magnanimous conduct were a regard for the honour of God and the religion of Jesus."

It was an excellent part of Luther's character, that in the most critical and difficult situations he could commit his cause to the God, whom he served, with firm and entire reliance on HIS WILL; and at the same time be as active and indefatigable in using all prudential means, as if the events depended solely on human exertions. In his present danger and perplexity, he cast his eyes on France, where formerly some opposition had been made to the fulness of papal domination; and where he hoped that he might profess and preach divine truth with greater security than in Germany. "Not," said he, in a letter to Spalatinus, "that I care much on my own account; for in fact I am concerned, that I should not be thought worthy to suffer for the truth; especially, as by going to Augsburg, I exposed myself to many dangers, and almost tempted God to bring evil upon me. It grieves me, however, to see the fair prospect of our rising seminary thus suddenly clouded; and the studies of the young men at Wittemberg, who are wonderfully zealous for the acquisition of sacred literature, blasted in the bud." In another letter to the same friend, he said, "Every

= Math. xli.

Some account of the religious character of the elector was given in page 668 of this Volume.—Szekendorf doubts whether his principal reason for supporting Luther, who was then the public teacher of divinity and philosophy in the university of Wittemberg, might not be the ardent desire which that prince always showed for the prosperity of his favourite seminary of learning. Be this as it may, it is certain, that even before the conferences at Augsburg, in a letter to cardinal Raphael, he expressed himself with great coolness and indifference respecting the doctrines of Luther. "I have never," says he, "taken upon me to defend either the writings or the sermons of Dr. Martin L., and I proved the same, which I now assert, both to Cajetan the pope's legate and to Milittiz his nuncio." Some authors consider this, as a confession on the part of Frederic, that he had not so much as read a line of Luther's publications, or heard him deliver his sermons: Others suppose that, in his concerns with the papal agents, he might dissemble his regard for the reformer, with a view of supporting him and his cause more effectually in the end. Luth. op. Wilt. Vol. I. p. 272.

day I expect from Rome the arrival of the ecclesiastical anathemas; and I am, therefore, disposing my affairs in such a manner, that when those curses shall arrive, I may be ready, like Abraham, to depart, not knowing whither. Yet, in another sense, I do know whither I shall go, for God is every where. However I leave with you this farewell-letter. "See that you have the courage to read the letter of a man excommunicated and accursed!" In a third letter he declared, he was ready either to go or stay. "Some friends," said he, "advise me to deliver myself up to the elector, who will protect me in some safe place and at the same time inform the pope's legate, that my person is under confinement, and that I am ready to give answers to such questions as shall be proposed to me. I commit this plan to your prudence. I am in the hands of God and of my friends. It vexes me to think, that it should be so commonly believed, that the prince in secret supports me. This report, if any thing can, will drive me hence, that I may not involve him in my dangers. To be brief, while I remain here, my liberty both of writing and of speaking is very much restrained; whereas if I leave Germany, I will open my heart to the world, and offer up my life freely in the service of Christ."

Those who have most considered, how great a trial to a thoughtful mind, a state of suspense is in dangerous and critical seasons, will form the best judgment of Luther's situation towards the end of the year 1518. The foregoing extracts lay open his secret feelings and resolutions, at the same time that they also exhibit his extraordinary faith, patience, and resignation.

In this conjuncture, the elector of Saxony signified his earnest wish that Luther would not leave Wittemberg.⁹ This spirited resolution is to be ascribed, partly to the interference and supplication of the universality of that place in behalf of their beloved professor, and partly to the imperious and threatening language of cardinal Cajetan.⁹ Frederic with a calmness and dignity, suitable to his character, declared, that he could not expel Luther from Wittemberg without doing much injury to his university, and farther that he should not consider him as an heretic till he had been heard and was convicted. Animated with this favourable determination of the prince, the professor of theology resolved to remain on the spot; and, in a discourse from the pulpit, he requested the people,—in case his person should at length become the victim of papal severity,—not to harbour the least ill-will against the pope or any human being whatever, but to commit the cause to God.

It will be proper to mention here, that besides the literary and controversial employments of the professor at Wittenberg, he had for some time discharged the office of pastor of the same town, as the substitute of Simon Heinsius, the ordinary minister, who then laboured under bodily infirmities; and thus this industrious reformer supported at once the character of a theological teacher and disputant, and also of a popular preacher and parochial clergyman.

Luther, desirous of anticipating the papal bull, which he daily expected, renewed his appeal to the pope BETTER INFORMED, or in failure of this, to a general council. Fifteen days after, Leo issued a bull, in which, without mentioning the name of Luther, he confirmed the doctrine of indulgences in the most absolute manner. By this step no less improvident than impious, he put it out of the power of the friends of the papacy, to vindicate or even to extenuate its conduct. The grossest venality and contempt of true piety and salutary discipline had prevailed in Germany through the sale of indulgences. To maintain the rectitude of the practice, without the least correction of excesses, at a time when the memory of the transactions was recent, prevented every attempt that might be made to reconcile Luther to the hierarchy. The providence of God was admirable in thus barring up his return to the church of Rome, while, as yet, he was far from being convinced of the totally anti-christian state of the popedom.

But the mercenary prostitution of indulgences had not been confined to Germany. In the summer of this same year 1518, Sampson a Franciscan of Milan, came to Zurich, to prosecute the scandalous traffic. There he was opposed by Huldric Zuinglius, afterwards the famous Swiss reformer.^a In the month of September, Sampson came to Zug, where a servant seeing the people press in crowds, addressed them: "Be not so importunate, I beseech you; let those enter first, who are furnished with money; care shall be taken afterwards of the poor." At Bern, the enormities exceeded, if possible, those which had been practised in Germany. When the sale of the indulgences was over, BAPTISMAL INNOCENCE was restored to all present, who should confess their sins, and thrice recite the Lord's prayer and the angelic salutation: Those also, who thrice went round the great church daily repeating prayers, might free what souls they pleased from purgatory. Still grosser corruptions than these were practised. But the infatuation of the hierarchy was incurable. Evangelical light and liberty were fast advancing to the relief both of Germany and Switzerland,—yet the rulers of the church shut

their eyes, and hardened their hearts. Scarcely roused from a state of shameful sloth and sensuality, they seem to have instantly fallen into the opposite extreme of blind presumption and impetuous rage. Pride, rashness, and a most tyrannical ambition appeared in all their counsels.

During the whole progress of the reformation, the pious reader has to admire the providential circumstances, which, both in succession and in concurrence, favoured the happy deliverance of the nations from papal captivity. We have just seen how the late haughty conduct of Cajetan tended to fix the mind of Frederic more steadily in the interests of the reformer; and this was a consequence which proved extremely influential upon the subsequent events. Immediately this Wise prince solicited the emperor to exert all his authority at Rome, that the present ecclesiastical controversy might be settled in Germany by impartial judges. What would have been the ultimate effect of this prudent step, we are unable to say. Maximilian died in the beginning of the year 1519; and during the INTERREGNUM, the prince elector, duke of Saxony, as Vicar of the empire, possessed sufficient power to protect and cherish Lutheranism in its infancy. "The violent tempest," says Luther, "subsidied by little and little; and the papistical thunders of excommunication were gradually more and more despised." The resolutions of Frederic were not a little confirmed by a letter which he received in the spring of 1519, from the learned Erasmus. Brevity does not permit me to present the reader with this elegant composition in which the writer manages his subject with wonderful address, dexterity, and politeness. —By the following answer, however, a judgment may be formed both of the matter contained in it, and also of the effect it produced on the mind of the prince.

The elector, duke of Saxony, to Erasmus—"It gives me the greatest satisfaction to be informed by you, that Lutheranism is not disapproved by the learned, and that the writings of doctor Martin are read with the greatest avidity. He is a person almost unanimously admired, at home and abroad, both for the integrity of his life and for his solid erudition. That he has remained hitherto in Saxony under our protection is, indeed, owing rather to the just cause he defends than to the man himself.

Nothing can be more contrary to our principles than to suffer a man, who has deserved reward, to be oppressed and punished: Nor with the help of Almighty God will we ever allow an innocent person to become a victim to the selfish malice of the wicked."

^a Father Paul, B. I. p. 8.

^b Page 60. Seckendorf. Höttinger.

The court of Rome, finding it impossible to stop the proceedings on Luther by mere authority and threatening, had now recourse to the arts of negotiation. The haughty pontiff had become sensible of his imprudence in having entrusted the management of the controversy to such a commissioner as Cajetan; but we shall soon see, that still he had learnt no lessons of true wisdom and moderation from what happened at Augsburg. He condescended indeed to employ a person of a different stamp; one, who by his insinuating manners and gentle treatment of the reformer, raised considerable expectations of at least a temporary peace; but happily for the reformation, this judicious and temperate policy was presently succeeded by measures most unaccountably imprudent and disgusting. This new legate was Charles Miltitz, a Saxon knight, who, as a lay character, might be supposed less under the dominion of party and prejudice than the Dominican cardinal, his predecessor. He was commissioned to present to the elector Frederic the golden consecrated cross; and, if possible, to put an end to all the ecclesiastical disputes which had produced the rupture between Luther and the Roman See. Frederic had formerly solicited the favour of the cross with much earnestness; but on this occasion, he is said to have received it with a cool and almost contemptuous politeness; and in no wise could he be induced to change his measures respecting his favourite professor of Wittenberg.

Miltitz, thus foiled in his attempts to influence the mind of the prince elector, repaired to Leipzig; and there finding Tetzel, he twice rebuked him with the greatest severity before his own provincial,* on account of his iniquitous practices in the business of indulgences. It appears from Miltitz's own letters that, as he passed through Germany, he had obtained perfect intelligence of the frauds and private vices of Tetzel; and probably he was the more desirous of exposing them, because, by abandoning that audacious Dominican, he imagined he should at once gratify the advocates for reformation, and abster the Roman pontiff from censure. With Luther himself the new legate had several conferences which proved fruitless, as to the essential points: and the only effect of these negotiations in the former part of 1519, seems to have been, that the electors of Saxony and of Treves agreed to defer the complete examination of the matters in dispute to the first German diet of the new emperor Charles V.; and that, in the mean time, Luther should write a submissive letter to the pope. To this our reformer readily consented, for he was by no means dis-

posed to break with the pontiff; and it is not improbable he would have continued an obedient subject of the Roman See all his days, if he might have been permitted, without molestation, to discharge the office of a faithful pastor of Christ. The learned translator of Moseheim, seems out of humour with him for having made "weak submissions" on this occasion; and yet he owns that, "properly speaking, there was no retraction of his former tenets, nor the smallest degree of respect shown to the infamous traffic of indulgences." If so, every judicious protestant, — though he may entirely agree with this excellent writer, that Luther's "views were not, as yet, very extensive, his former prejudices entirely dispelled, or his reforming principles steadily fixed," may nevertheless maintain that his submissive conduct at this time, taken with all the circumstances which accompanied it, indicated strength of mind, not weakness, and a spirit of discrimination rather than of blind acquiescence. We ought not to judge of this great man by the feelings and habits of protestants of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

His inimical historian† Maimbourg, says, "his letter to the pope was rather civil than humble, but that it contained nothing to the purpose." Let the reader judge from the following concise account of it, whether Luther, according to the light which he then possessed, did not take effectual care not to entangle his conscience by any improper concessions.

He said, it was a great grief to him to find himself accused of want of respect to the church of Rome: that his design in all he had done was to maintain the honour of that church; and that, as his writings were now spread throughout all Germany, he could not retract his assertions without dishonouring the said church: that the persons who really injured the Holy See were the very preachers whom he had opposed: they disgraced their sacred office by the most absurd discourses, and by seeking only to gratify their avarice under the protection of his Holiness.—Lastly, he declared, that he was ready to observe silence in future respecting indulgences, provided his adversaries would also forbear their provocations.—In concluding he solemnly protested, that all along he had aimed at nothing but to prevent the mother church from being polluted by the vile imputation of avarice, and the people from being seduced by a false notion that the indulgences were preferable to truly benevolent actions.‡

Of his personal conferences with Miltitz, the following compressed account is extracted from his own letters and from the Latin

* This used to be considered as a peculiar mark of the pope's favour and esteem.
 † Beck. p. 67.

‡ Mosh. vol. ii. Chap. II. sect. ix.

† Id.

‡ Sect. 24.

‡ Luth. Op. vol. i. Dis. Pin. Cent. 16.

edition of his works. "Charles Miltitz saw me at Altenburg, and complained, that I had united the whole world to myself, and drawn it aside from the pope; that he had discovered this at the inns, as he travelled. "Martin," said he, "I took you for some solitary old theologian; whereas I find you a person in all the vigour of life. Then you are so much favoured with the popular opinion, that I could not expect, with the help of twenty-five thousand soldiers, to force you with me to Rome." After this flattery, he intreated me to consult for pacific measures, and promised, that he would endeavour that the pope should do the same. We supped together, and I was treated with the greatest courtesy. I conducted myself in such a manner as if I had not seen through these Italian arts." I could only promise, that I would do all, which I could do consistently with truth and a good conscience; that I also loved peace, and was driven into these broils by mere necessity. This Charles Miltitz was esteemed a frivolous character, and his advice was frivolous; nevertheless it is my judgment, that if the friends of the papacy and the pope himself had treated me in this manner at first, matters would never have come to so great a rupture. Instead of that, the pope condemned me unheard, and raged with his bulls; and the crafty archbishop of Mentz became the dupe of his own cunning. All the blame is at his door; for, his sole object in suppressing my doctrine, was to save his own part of the money, which should be collected by the indulgences. But now all the papal plans and attempts are to no purpose. The Lord hath awaked and stands to judge the people; and though they slay us, they will not gain their point."

Luther was always distinguished by a spirit of respect and obedience towards his superiors, whether in church or state. In this negotiation with Miltitz, and also in his letter to the pope, we discern much of this spirit, joined to great tenderness of conscience and an amiable sensibility of temper on account of the humane treatment he had received. Keep in view, that, as yet, he apprehended the papal power to have just foundations, however it might have been abused; keep in view his own description of his feelings,* penned in moments of the greatest deliberation, and long after the turbulent scenes were passed; keep in view the state of the rest of mankind in christendom, and you will acknowledge the Saxon reformer to have exhibited a rare example of courage and firmness in these memorable transactions. In proposing a compromise of silence on both sides in the affair of indulgences, he may be thought to have acted inconsistently with his former declarations, and to have conceded too much to the hier-

* Italitatis,

• Page 634.

rarchy, but the answer is, he had already manfully resisted the Roman See in that abominable traffic; and he began to hesitate how far it was his proper business to proceed further in a matter of that sort: In a word, his conscience was at present puzzled respecting the extent of the obedience which he owed to the rulers whose authority he then allowed. Harassed with doubts, and perfectly aware of the danger that threatened him, he would have given the world for a sound and discreet counsellor: Of the danger he sought no partner: but, alas, his best and wisest friends, when pressed closely concerning the most critical and perilous part of the contest, absolutely stood aloof.^b After long and diligent reflection on the best authenticated facts, and the peculiar situation of Luther, the very doubts which arose in his mind, appear to me, I confess, to imply both extraordinary integrity of principle, and great vigour of intellect.

But whatever were the secret motives of our reformer in making his concessions, Leo X. disdained to accept the submission, and open the door of reconciliation. The serious reader will not think me troublesome in repeatedly drawing his attention to the kind providence of God, which appeared so remarkably in many particulars of the contest before us. While the Roman pontiff, rejecting counsels of peace, was listening to enraged bigots, greedy Dominicans, and ambitious cardinals, the inquisitive spirit of the humble professor of Wittemberg, was enabled, by degrees and a constant study of the scriptures, to acquire a practical conviction that the tyranny of the papal hierarchy was no longer to be endured. Luther's letter to the pope was written in the former part of 1519; and by his two letters to Scarpitius, we have seen how much better he understood the true principles of the papal system in 1522, and 1523.^c It was undoubtedly this gradual insight into the enormities of the popedom, which co-operating with the infatuation of the pontifical advisers in their unaccountable aversion to healing and pacific measures, raised that general spirit of indignation, and of opposition to the established religion, which at length terminated in the blessed reformation.

While the pope's nuncio was negotiating a reconciliation in Germany, Tettel, the wretched subaltern, whose scandalous conduct had so much disgraced his employers, met with the reward, which frequently awaits the ministers of iniquity. He found himself deserted by all the world.

^b After he had conferred with Miltitz, he wrote to his friend Spalatinus; and he also particularly intreated the elector Frederic, that, for the sake of Almighty God, he would use so much clemency towards him, as freely to say, what he wished him to do in the present circumstances. Sect. p. 63.

^c Pages 691, 692.

Miltitz, in particular, had treated him so roughly, that this daring and boisterous instrument of papal avarice and extortion actually fell sick, wasted away, and at last died of a broken heart.—A dreadful lesson!—This unhappy man left the world, as far as appears, destitute of comfort in his own soul after he had administered a false peace to thousands! It became necessary for those whom he had served to discard him, and he had no resources in his own conscience. The pontiff's displeasure is said to have affected him exceedingly; but we have no evidence that he searched the word of God in true penitence and humility. A little before his death, Luther, bearing of his anguish of mind, and sympathizing with him in his distress, wrote to him in the most kind and consolatory strains, and begged him not to be distressed with the recollection of any thing that had passed between them.^d If the letter had been extant, we should have found in it, I apprehend, instructions concerning repentance, and warm exhortations to lay hold of the promises of the gospel.—If the French historians, Maimbourg and Varillas, had been acquainted with this fact, they would hardly, one would think, have represented Luther, as a man of a vindictive, implacable, temper.*

About the middle of the year 1519, Erasmus wrote, from Lovain, an epistle to Luther, which proves with what caution and temper that great man had beheld the progress of the contest. He takes care not to appear a partizan of Luther; he speaks of him with a studied ambiguity; commends him so far as he could consistently with his determined purpose not to expose himself to trouble or rebuke, and recommends to him moderation and mildness in his proceedings. In this last point, he certainly deserved the thanks of Luther:—let us remember, however, that timid and artful politicians were never employed, to any good purpose, in the service of Jesus Christ.

No man understood better than Erasmus the art of suggesting advice, in nice and difficult cases, without giving offence. The latter part of his letter to Luther runs thus: "In England you have persons of the greatest distinction, who think highly of your writings. Here also you have advocates, and among them there is one most excellent character. For my part, I keep clear of all party, with a view to be of as much service as I can to the revival of literature. And I think one does more good by civility and moderation than by violence. In that way Christ has brought mankind under his government: In that way St. Paul abrogated the Jewish ritual. It is better to complain

of those who abuse the authority of the pontiffs, than of the pontiffs themselves; and I would make the same remark respecting kings. We may argue as strongly as we can against notions that have long prevailed, but we should never contradict them positively. It is more effectual to treat acrimonious abuse with contempt than to confute it. On every occasion we should guard against arrogant and factious LANGUAGE; nothing can be more opposite to the spirit of christianity. At the same time we should keep a strict watch over our MOTIVES. Anger, hatred, vain glory, lay snares for us, even when we are most piously employed. I do not say these things to you by way of admonition, for you do observe the very rules here recommended. I mention them rather for the purpose of exhorting you to persevere in the same conduct always. Your commentaries on the Psalms please me exceedingly; and I hope they will do much good. The prior of the monastery at Antwerp says, he was formerly one of your scholars. He is a man of real primitive christianity, and loves you most cordially. He is almost the only one who preaches Jesus Christ. The rest in general, either aim at lucre, or treat the people with old wives' fables.—May the Lord Jesus daily bestow upon you more plentifully his own share of the glory of his name and the public good!—Farewell."^e

There are many excellent observations interspersed throughout this composition. It is written in Latin, and is a good specimen of that elegant adroitness with which the accomplished author always conducted himself in affairs of peculiar delicacy.

But it was not only the wary Erasmus and the timid Staupitius, who shrunk from the dangerous contest with the hierarchy in which Luther was involved, even Spalatinus himself was not a little intimidated by the daring measures of his adventurous friend. Several of the elector's court also were alarmed in a similar way; and thus the Saxon reformer, whose righteous cause was eminently that of mankind in general, and who himself needed encouragement in his perils and anxieties, was called upon to rouse and animate the drooping minds of his best supporters, who began to waver, and complain that matters were carried too far. This departure from a steady and consistent conduct in his more enlightened adherents was, no doubt, a trial peculiarly severe and vexatious to Luther. Men expect, from their enemies, reproach, misrepresentation, calumny; they are prepared for these things; they even triumph in them, and are stirred up by them to defence and victory: It is when their friends become tame or treacherous; when they deceive or desert them in critical mo-

^d Luth. op. Witt.

^e Maimbourg in Sect. p. 18. Varillas, in eod. p. 22. See also p. 672. of this Vol.

^f Ep. Erasmi. 127. Vol. I.

ments, that the finest mind, acting on principles merely human, is apt to give way. Conscious of integrity and disinterestedness, and evercome with chagrin and disappointment, a man, in such a case, abandons altogether a dangerous conflict, where his solitary efforts, against a host of adversaries, will prove inevitably abortive. Not so, however, where the cause is that of true religion, and where the gospel of Christ has laid strong hold both of the understanding and the affections. We then look for the operation of other motives besides those of mere human nature. As we then serve a MASTER, who MUST be obeyed, we have promises of help, directions for resignation, and grounds of comfort in the issue of ill-success, such as belong to no worldly enterprises whatever.—The following extract of a letter to Spalatius will illustrate these observations;—

LUTHER TO SPALATIUS.—

"Do not give way to fear too much," say dear Spalatius; "neither tease your mind by filling it with human imaginations. You know, I must have perished long ago in my various struggles with the supporters of papal abominations, unless Christ had taken care of me and my concerns. Was there a single person, who did not expect that my ruin would have taken place before this time? I assure you, I suppress many things, which, if I were elsewhere, I should freely publish concerning the enormities of Rome. But you must never hope that I shall be free from persecution and danger, unless I were entirely to give up the cause of sound divinity. My friends, if they please, may suppose me beside myself; nevertheless I say, if this contest be really of God, it will not be ended, till TRUTH effectually save itself by its own right hand; not by mine, nor by yours. From the very first I have been expecting matters to come to the situation in which they are at this moment. However I always told you, that I would quit the country, if my residence in Saxony was attended with any danger to the prince."

From this letter,—which plainly implies a previous communication from Spalatius expressive of much apprehension and uneasiness,—a judgment may be formed of the sentiments respecting Luther, which probably prevailed at the elector's court in the former part of the year 1519. Spalatius resided with Frederic in the capacity both of secretary and domestic chaplain; and therefore would take no step of importance without the secret knowledge and approbation of that prince. Luther was perfectly aware of this; and in his letter to his friend, would, no doubt, consider the fears and anxieties, which he was endeavouring to quiet, as, in reality, the fears and anxieties of the elector himself. Hence he wisely repeats his readi-

ness at all times to quit Saxony, if his presence there should be judged injurious to the interests of the prince.

On this occasion, however, neither the elector of Saxony or his court should be accused of downright insincerity. In the main, they certainly favoured the principles of Luther, and rejoiced in his success; but they disliked any material share of the hazard of the controversy. Hence, they became cold, supine, and irresolute; and hence, their communications, which ought to have furnished spirited counsel and encouragement, dwindled into prudential lessons of caution and remonstrance.—Modern protestants should know the extreme disadvantages under which the great CHAMPION of christian liberty laboured in the beginning of the reformation.

The immediate circumstance, which seems to have given the alarm at this time^a to the friends of Luther, was the bold declarations of this theologian, in his answers to the positions of Eckius respecting the foundation of the pope's authority. He had written to Spalatius very explicitly on this subject, but seems not completely to have satisfied his scruples. To call in question the origin of the power of the pope, was to tread tender ground; the nations, as yet, secretly revered his majesty, and dreaded his vengeance; though, in regard to ecclesiastical abuses in general, they had indeed begun to open their eyes and were receiving fresh light and space.

The name of Eckius of Ingolstadt has already been mentioned^b among the adversaries of Luther. This able and learned doctor of divinity had formerly been the friend of our reformer; but a thirst of fame and a prospect of worldly advantages seduced him from the cause of TRUTH. The facts we have to produce, indicate but too plainly the motives of Eckius. After his literary defeat in the affair of indulgences, he circulated thirteen propositions, all of them levelled against the heresies of Lutheranism. One of these propositions affirmed the grand article of a papist's faith, namely, "That the pontiffs are vicars of Christ, and the successors of St. Peter." Luther had the sagacity instantly to see through his design; and expressed himself to the following effect. "I never so much as touched upon this subject in any of my discourses. Eckius now brings it forward to serve several purposes. He thinks, he shall hereby cast an odium upon me, and at the same time flatter the court of Rome, to his own profit, and to the ruin of his brother Martin Luther."

It will here be proper to give a brief account of the famous disputation which was

^a Vis. about the middle of 1519.

^b Page 682.

^c Propos. Eccl. Luth. Op. vol. I.

carried on publicly at Leipsic, for many days together in the course of this year.

Eckius, relying on the brilliancy of his own talents and the popularity of his cause, earnestly sought for a public exhibition of theological skill; and, with this view, challenged Carolstadt, the colleague and adherent of Luther, and even Luther himself, to try their strength with him in a contest on the points in dispute. Carolstadt was a doctor of divinity, and arch-deacon of Wirtemberg, and is esteemed one of the first open defenders of Luther. The challenge was accepted; and George, duke of Saxony, uncle of the elector, offered the combatants his city of Leipsic, as the scene of debate, with an engagement for their security and a promise of every convenience. He was himself a strenuous Roman Catholic, and he expected that great glory would accrue to the papal cause from the well known abilities and attainments of Eckius. Luther obtained leave to be present at the contest as a spectator, but was expressly denied the grant of a safe conduct, if he attempted to appear in the character of a disputant. The assembly was splendid, the expectations of mankind were strongly fixed; and it was vainly imagined that some decision would be made concerning the objects of contention.

The first subject of debate between Eckius and Carolstadt respected the limits of nature and grace. The latter disputant defended the whole doctrine of Augustine concerning grace, which, Luther observes, Eckius did not oppose by argument, or with any real difference of sentiment, but only in mere words and in appearance. He granted that FREE-WILL without grace could effect nothing but sin. "It avails then," continues Luther, "not to good but to evil. Where then is its liberty? Moreover, every illiterate person, who hears the expression FREE-WILL, naturally supposes that it implies man to be equally capable of good and evil; whence he will presume on his own strength, and think that he can convert himself to God. Eckius knows very well the impiety of this notion, yet he supports and spreads it. I too admit that man's will is free in a certain sense; not because it is now in the same state as it was in Paradise, but because it was made free originally, and may, through God's grace, become so again."

Such were the sentiments of Luther on this difficult subject; and, if due allowance be made for the impropriety of the term free-will, his ideas appear sufficiently in harmony with what the most evangelical persons, in all ages, have maintained. The whole controversy was carried on with much clamour and confusion; the Roman party prevailed in popularity at Leipsic; Eckius delivered what he had to say with prodigious animation, and is allowed to have far exceeded Carolstadt in

energetic exertions of voice and action. Luther protests in the most solemn manner that as long as an appeal to books and written documents were admitted, his friend Carolstadt defended himself with a rich variety of apt and excellent quotations; but, says he, "Eckius made a proposal, that all books should be laid aside, and the dispute go on without them; the multitude gave a shout of approbation; and then, I freely own, that Eckius, who had the better memory and a greater flow of words, supported his side of the question in a more plausible manner than his opponent."^b

This disputation continued for six days;¹ during which time, the superior eloquence and acuteness of Eckius seems to have afforded a temporary triumph to the enemies of the reformation. Flushed with success, and thirsting for glory, this champion of the papal system, came to Luther at his lodgings, and, with an air of confidence, said, "I understand you will not dispute with me in public." "How can I dispute with you," said Luther, "when the duke George refuses me my request of a safe conduct." Eckius replied, "If am not to combat you, I will spend no more time on Carolstadt. It was on your account that I came here. Suppose I could obtain the public faith for your safety,—would you then meet me and try your strength?"^m Luther consented; and very soon after he had the duke's leave to take Carolstadt's place in the public debate.

This second theological conflict was carried on for ten days, with uncommon ardour and without intermission. Among the articles of controversy were the doctrines of purgatory and indulgences, the nature of repentance and remission of sins, and, particularly, the foundation of the supremacy of the Roman pontiffs. It was in this last article of the controversy, that Eckius placed his chief strength and expectation of victory. His numerous audience in general, with the duke of Saxony at their head, favoured the papal cause: Long habits of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice, in religious matters, had established the Romish doctrines; and the few, who ventured to inquire for reasons of their faith, were deemed impious and accursed, and worthy of expulsion from the community.

Moreover this question concerning the superiority of the Roman See was well contrived to promote the ambitious designs of Eckius in every way. Luther, it was foreseen, must either shun the main point in debate by disgraceful evasions; or, by a direct avowal of his doctrines, expose himself to the charge of open heresy. He must either yield the palm of eloquence and of theologi-

^b Sect. 73.

¹ From June 27, 1519, to July 4.

^m Melch. Ad.

cal skill to his crafty adversary, or he would inevitably furnish such decisive proofs of rebellion against the hierarchy as would ensure his own condemnation at the court of Rome. Thus the troublesome innovator was supposed to be entangled in an extricable dilemma, while the prudent defender of the established religion, looking forward to nothing but conquest and glory, anticipated the praises and honours of the Roman pontiff.—Luther, whom we have observed to have been fully sensible in how nice and critical a situation he was placed, was much hurt by the ungenerous conduct of Eckius in this business, and severely reproached him afterwards on the account.

To the talents and the artifices of the popish advocate, the Saxon reformer, besides his superior abilities and more intimate knowledge of the scriptures, opposed a good conscience, a firm determination to hazard every thing in the cause of TRUTH, and a confident expectation of the blessing of the Almighty. In particular, against Eckius's doctrine of the divine right of the popes, he advanced the following proposition: "All the proofs which can be produced to shew that the church of Rome is superior to other churches, are taken out of insipid decretals of the popes themselves, made within these four hundred years; and against this notion of supremacy, there are passages of the holy scriptures, approved histories for eleven hundred years, and the determinations of the council of Nice."

When Eckius contended, that the expressions "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church," "And I will give unto thee the keys,"..... evinced the supremacy of St. Peter and his successors, that this was the explanation given by the holy fathers; and that the contrary opinion was among the errors of Wickliff and John Huss; Luther in reply said, that he could produce more passages from the fathers in support of his own interpretation of the passages in question than Eckius could of his; but that he had no hesitation to add, that even if all the fathers, without exception, had understood the passages in that sense, he would confute them by the authority of St. Paul, and St. Peter himself, who say, that Jesus Christ is the only foundation and corner stone of his church. He further observed, that the words, "Thou art Peter,"—if construed strictly, must be confined to the person of Peter, and therefore the authority conveyed by them ceased when that apostle died; and that if their meaning was to be extended to the church, and to Peter's successors, no reason could be given, why ALL the apostles and ALL their successors should not be understood to be the successors of Peter.

Lastly, he intimated that his adversary had been very unfortunate in appealing to the authority of Cyprian. "If," said Luther, "the learned doctor will agree to stand or fall by the authority of Cyprian, we shall quickly put an end to this controversy. For, in the first place, Cyprian never addresses Cornelius, the bishop of Rome, in any other manner than 'My dear brother;' and in the second, he expressly says, that every bishop has a distinct jurisdiction of his own, and that bishops ought not to interfere with each other, but wait for the day of judgment by our Lord Jesus Christ."^o

Eckius was so much struck with the reasonings of Luther, and especially with the neat, and well digested order in which his materials were arranged, that he was compelled to acknowledge, before a splendid audience, the "qualifications and attainments of his reverend opponent." He even besought their illustrious and magnificent mightinesses to pardon himself, who was so much occupied with other concerns, if he should not be able to produce such a mass of accurate testimonies as the learned doctor had laid before them. He came to Leipsic, he said, not to write books, but to dispute.

It will be unnecessary to trouble the protestant reader with a minute detail of a multitude of arguments, which were brought forward in this debate with great warmth, eloquence, and dexterity, on both sides.—We shall make a few concise observations on several of the controverted points, and also take notice of some instructive facts and circumstances which are connected with this famous disputation at Leipsic, and then dismiss the subject.

Though Luther judged it impious to maintain the DIVINE RIGHT of the pope in that strict sense, which makes him the successor of St. Peter and vicar of Christ, his extreme reverence for the scriptures, and his tenderness of conscience, disposed him, as yet, to allow the superiority of the Roman See,—but on different grounds. It could not be denied that the pontiffs had possessed a decided pre-eminence from age to age, and therefore, he conceived, it was his duty not to resist "the powers that be." This scriptural argument, which for a long time appeared to his mind in itself unanswerable, was still further strengthened by two powerful reasons. Firstly, the will of God, he thought, might be clearly collected from the facts, independent of Scripture.—Unless it had been the will of God, the popes could never have attained so great and durable a dominion. Secondly, "The whole body of christians," he said, "own themselves to be under the Roman pontiff: This universal con-

sent is a consideration of the greatest weight: The unity of the church should be preserved in every thing that is not directly contrary to the word of God."⁹

Entirely agreeable to these sentiments is the declaration of Luther in one of his letters to Spalatinus, who, it should seem, had been directed by the elector of Saxony to admonish him most seriously, in all things to observe a reverential obedience towards the pope. "To separate myself," says he, "from the apostolical See of Rome is a thing that has never yet entered my mind."¹⁰ However his next letter to the same friend intimates a further insight into the essence of popery. "That I may be the better qualified," says he, "for the ensuing debate at Leipsic, I am turning over the decretals of the popes; and I would whisper into your ear, that I begin to entertain doubts, whether the Roman pontiff be not the very antichrist of the scriptures, or his messenger; so wretchedly corrupted by him, in the decretals, are the pure doctrines of Christ." As long as this new sentiment remained crude and unsettled in the mind of Luther, it certainly behoved him not to act upon it; but it is not difficult to understand how the divulging of so important a secret to Spalatinus must have startled the elector Frederic and his court, who, we have seen, were sufficiently alarmed with the liberties which had already been taken with the pontifical authority.

How different were the views and motives of the persons who took part in the affairs of religion, about the time of the public controversy at Leipsic, and some months before! Leo X. was indolent and ill-advised; perfectly indifferent in regard to religion and piety; only anxious to advance the opulence, grandeur, and dominion of the Roman See. His ostentatious champion Eckius, on the one hand, flattered and misled his lordly master who pretended to be infallible; and, on the other, menaced and calumniated the Augustine monk, while in reality he was seeking only his own aggrandisement. Frederic the Wise, and some of his court, grieved for several of the reigning abuses, which were obvious and undeniable, but still remained in a wretched bondage, confirmed by long habits of superstitious submission. Though friendly to improvements in religion, they dreaded the rude hand of the Saxon reformer, and were in general too much disposed to bow to the majesty of the pope.—Lastly, Luther was daily approaching, by firm but gradual advances, to that evangelical liberty, of which he became, under God, the principal reviver in Europe.—Let these facts and observations be kept in mind, and they will help us to discover, what must have

been the feelings of our reformer at Leipsic, while he was disputing with Eckius concerning the pope's supremacy. To have denied the DIVINE RIGHT of the pontifical jurisdiction, according to the fullest, and most extended interpretation of the words, was sufficiently dangerous; but to have dropped the slightest insinuation that the bishop of Rome was actually the antichrist of the New Testament, or, that the Roman church was antichristian in principle, would probably have cost him his life.

The more thoroughly we examine the principles of Luther, the more exactly consistent do we find them with his practice, even in the most difficult circumstances. So in the present instance: He seriously believed, that long possession and the consent of the faithful¹ were solid arguments for the papal supremacy; but some rays of fresh light burst in upon the mind of the honest inquirer at the very time when he was arming for the combat at Leipsic. He was then in no condition either to confirm or to do away his new suspicions of the antichristian character of the popedom. What was to be done? He determined to dismiss those suspicions for the present, till he should have leisure to weigh them; and in the mean time he adhered to the only principle, by which, in his judgment, the duty of obedience to the existing hierarchy could be supported. He dared openly to assert,² that it was far better the Roman pontiffs should, with fear and trembling, see the foundation of their authority in the permission of God and the consent of their subjects, than that, under a notion of DIVINE RIGHT, they should feel themselves secure, depend upon force and terror, and by degrees exercise an odious tyranny.

This declaration, though it fell greatly short of the creed of a true Roman catholic, yet, by containing an actual acknowledgment of the pope's supremacy, manifested a spirit of obedience and reconciliation on the part of the reformer. Nor was it possible for him, without doing the utmost violence to his conscience, to have exhibited a nearer consent to the doctrines of Eckius. There is even some reason to believe that if his friends, namely, the elector of Saxony and his court, had not discovered so excessive an anxiety lest he should offend the pope by disrespectful treatment, he would have conceded less at this time to his opponent, respecting the grand article of Roman catholic doctrine; or, at least, would have acted with more reserve on a point where his own faith, though modified and less offensive, was certainly beginning to waver. Before the public disputation at Leipsic, Luther printed and circulated his sentiments on the pope's su-

⁹ Revolut. Lutheri. ¹⁰ Ep. p. 99.
¹ Ep. p. 100. See p. 698.

¹ Luth. Op. Resol.

² Resolut. de pot. Papæ.

premacy,—the same in substance as is related in the preceding pages. He took that step, he tells us, because he had great doubts, whether he should be allowed to enter the lists with Eckius as a public disputant. Three times by letters, he says, he put the question to the duke George, but could obtain no answer.* All this is, no doubt, strictly true; yet **WHENCE**, it is asked, arose the solicitude of Luther to appear, at all and on any principles, as the public defender of pontifical authority;—the public defender of an unscriptural opinion, which he was soon going to abandon with abhorrence and detestation; and which, in his private letters, he was already beginning to reprobate in very significant language?

Seckendorf ascribes these conciliatory measures entirely to the fears and remonstrances of the elector Frederic and his court; and thinks that Luther in this instance acted contrary both to his own judgment and his inclination.† To differ from this very judicious and candid memorialist can never be pleasant, and will, in general, be found unsafe: Nevertheless, I cannot but think that, in estimating the motives of the Saxon reformer, his friends as well as his adversaries have, on this and several other occasions, too much overlooked his profound veneration for established authorities. They seem to have scarcely supposed it possible, that a man, who was so deeply concerned in the confusions and divisions of the church, should still have been a friend to peace and good order. Whereas, in fact, Luther's spirit of submission to legal establishments is as exemplary and unquestionable, as his courage and resolution in defending christian liberty is truly wonderful and unparalleled:—A proper attention to this part of his character will lead the candid inquirer to satisfactory explanations of his conduct in some cases where he has been too hastily accused of inconsistency.‡

Luther's own description of his feelings respecting the matters in dispute between Eckius and himself ought not to be omitted here; as it will, doubtless, be preferred to any conjectures either of Roman catholics or of Protestants, especially by those, who have observed the integrity and the precision with which this faithful servant of God always lays open his mind on serious occasions. My own case, says he, is a notable example of the difficulty with which a man emerges from erroneous notions of long standing.

* Lib. I. Ep.

† Page 71. Seck.

‡ The reader will not suppose me to insinuate, that Luther's respect for the elector of Saxony and his court had no weight in determining him to treat the papal authority in a reverential manner during his controversy with Eckius. On the contrary, I believe it had considerable weight. But why is the consideration of other motives to be omitted; and particularly of such motives as are known to have been congenial with the man?

How true is the proverb, custom is a second nature! How true is that saying of Augustine, Habit, if not resisted, becomes necessity. I, who, both publicly and privately, had taught divinity with the greatest diligence for seven years, inasmuch that I retained in my memory almost every word of my lectures, was in fact at that time only just initiated into the knowledge and faith of Christ; I had only just learnt that a man must be justified and saved, not by works, but by the faith of Christ; and lastly, in regard to pontifical authority, though I publicly maintained that the pope was not the head of the church by a DIVINE RIGHT, yet I stumbled at the very next step, namely, that the whole papal system was a Satanic invention. This I did not see, but contended obstinately for the pope's RIGHT, FOUNDED ON HUMAN REASONS; so thoroughly deluded was I, by the example of others, by the title of HOLY CHURCH, and by my own habits. Hence I have learnt to have more candour for bigoted papists, especially if they are not much acquainted with sacred, or perhaps even with profane history.¶

The victory in the theological contest at Leipsic, as might have been expected, was claimed by both sides. But, instead of repeating many contradictory and positive assertions, that have originated in prejudice and party-zeal, it will be better to mention several undeniable facts, which may assist the judgment in discovering what were the real sentiments of mankind at the time of this transaction, so celebrated in ecclesiastical history.

1. George, the duke of Saxony, who, on all occasions, was warmly attached to the papal interests, invited the disputants, after the debate was finished, to a convivial entertainment, and treated them with the greatest liberality and condescension. During dinner he laid his hands on the shoulders of Luther and Eckius, and gently stroking them said, "whether the pope exists by DIVINE or by HUMAN RIGHT, HE IS, HOWEVER, THE POPE." "This prince," says Luther, "would never have made this observation, if he had not felt the force of my arguments."§

2. Luther complains bitterly of the uncivil treatment which he met with in general from the inhabitants and the university of Leipsic; and he observes on the contrary, what kindnesses and honours they heaped upon his adversary Eckius. Yet notwithstanding both their aversion to the reformer, and their attachment to the popedom, Hoffmann, who was at that time rector of the university, and who had been appointed judge of the arguments alleged on both sides, refused to declare to whom the victory belonged; so that the decision was left to the universities.

¶ Luth. Op. vol. i. pref.

§ Luth. Op. vol. i. Melch. Adm. Seck. p. 74.

of Erfurt and Paris.^a The former of these, in spite of the importunate solicitations of George the duke of Saxony, remained perfectly silent: The latter, also, gave no judgment concerning the controversy at Leipsic, —though, sometime afterwards,^b —contrary to the favourable hopes which Luther had conceived of that learned body,—they censured, as heretical, several of his positions or theses, collected from his various writings.

3. The Romish advocate Maimbourg allows, “that both the disputants displayed much ingenuity and erudition during their combat in the castle of Leipsic, but with this difference, that THE TURTLE, defended by a man of sound principles, like Eckius, vanquished error, though supported with all the knowledge and subtlety of a fine genius.” This testimony of an inimical historian proves the celebrity of the talents of Luther; but the FACT of which I would here particularly take notice, is, the undeniable consequence which the exertion of those talents, in vehement and subtle disputation for ten days together, produced on the mind of Eckius. His bitterness and enmity against his opponent is well known to have suddenly increased, from this period, beyond all bounds. The sequel of our narrative will show, with how much personal malice and resentment he sought the destruction of the Saxon reformer, and also how mischievous his rash counsels proved to the interests of the Roman See. The reader will then judge for himself, whether the furious conduct of the papal champion is best explained, on the supposition of his consciousness of superiority and of victory in the affairs at Leipsic, or a revengeful sense of the humiliation and defeat which he suffered in that memorable contest.^c

It was in an accurate acquaintance with the holy scriptures, and with ecclesiastical history, that Luther more particularly manifested his superiority over Eckius. Very full and exact documents are in existence, both of what was said and what was written in the disputation; and no well-informed Roman Catholic will deny this to be a fair statement of the case. But notwithstanding the increased reputation with which the German theologian departed from the scene of controversy, it was easy to foresee, that the court of Rome would now be more incensed against him than ever. He had indeed almost agreed with his adversary on some of the disputed points; he had even defended the authority of the Roman See, by placing it on the best foundation in his power,—in short, he had exhibited a spirit of fidelity, moderation and obedience; but all this could not exiate the unpardonable offence of searching the sacred oracles for himself, of

confuting the papal pretensions to divine appointment and infallibility,—and what was deemed perhaps, if not the most heinous, the most dangerous crime of all,—of resisting and exposing the flagitious practices of the inferior agents and instruments of ecclesiastical rapine and tyranny. The man, who had proceeded to such extremities, was not to be managed by mild and gentle admonitions; neither was he to be gained over by bribes and flattery; he was an enemy of the holy church, and justly merited all she could inflict in her utmost fury and indignation.

Moreover, popery was not a religion which betrayed only occasional defects and errors: It had long been a SYSTEM of corruption; all the parts of which were thoroughly connected with each other, and conspired together to deceive, defraud, and domineer over mankind. The members of the system sympathized with their head in a remarkable manner: They saw their very existence in its safety; and flew to its defence on the slightest appearance of danger. In return, the sovereign head of this vast body superintended the respective interests of all the members with exquisite care, and even with paternal solicitude.—If, in some instances, the conduct of the Roman pontiffs does not exactly accord with this representation, the deviation will be found to have arisen, never from a relaxation or a change of principle, but from pride, contempt, indolence, and a sense of security. This was the case, we have seen, with Leo X. in the very early stages of Lutheranism.

Striking examples of this reciprocal sort of sensibility and mutual protection were furnished, in the latter part of this year, 1519, by the two universities of Louvain and Cologne, and the cardinal de Tortosa. There can be no doubt, but that this dignified ecclesiastic, who himself afterwards succeeded Leo X. in the pontificate, acted in all he did by the direction of the court of Rome. Accordingly we find one of his letters, addressed to the principal academics of Louvain, full of hard terms against Luther and his writings, at the same time containing stimulative exhortations and admonitions,—that they should give a public testimony of their disapprobation of such mischievous heresies. The divines of Louvain appear to have been of themselves sufficiently disposed to this measure, and even to have consulted the cardinal respecting its propriety. He commended their faithful zeal; and the result of this mutual communication was a public decree of the rulers of the university, in which they condemn many of Luther's propositions and doctrines, and pronounce them false, scandalous, and heretical. These warm advocates for the established faith did not stop here. They sent one of Martin Luther's books to the divines of

^a Mosheim, vol. II.

^b Not till the year 1521.

^c Mosheim, vol. II. ch. II. sect. x. and Mr. MacLaine's note.

Cologne, and requested them to censure its heretical contents in a public manner. These presently pronounced it full of errors and heresies, directed it to be suppressed; and declared, that it ought to be burnt, and the author of it obliged to make a public recantation.⁴—Thus, by management of this sort, the friends of the papacy, very soon after their defeat and disgrace at Leipsic, obtained the sanction of two universities in favour of the reigning corruptions, while those learned seminaries, on their part, failed not to secure to themselves the approbation and applause of the Roman See.

It would be an useless employment to detail the particulars of what passed in the conferences at Leipsic, respecting several Romish doctrines, which in our times give not the smallest concern to any intelligent protestant.

On the superstitious notion of PURGATORY many arguments and distinctions were produced on both sides. In general, Luther admitted his firm belief of the existence of such a place, and even that some obscure hints of it were to be found in scripture. But he denied that any thing clear and convincing was revealed in any part of the sacred writings, concerning this doctrine.⁵ As the researches of this great man grew deeper, he gradually doubted of several points, which he then held sacred; and in process of time, he dismissed them from his creed entirely. The Roman catholic sentiment of the number of the sacraments, and of the communion under ONE KIND, might be mentioned here.

It was not by accident that Eckius brought forward several propositions concerning the nature OF INDULGENCES. This was the grand question which had produced all the present dissensions in the church. It was closely connected with every inquiry that related to pontifical authority: It was, IN PRACTICE, the exercise of a very material part of that power, which, in THEORY, was pretended to originate in a Divine Right. To entangle therefore, or crush, the reformer on this point, in a public debate and before a splendid audience, would furnish such a proof of zeal for the faith, of ability to defend it, and of obedience to the hierarchy, as would infallibly ensure every reward, which ambition could wish for, or which gratitude could bestow.

Luther extricated himself from the difficulty in which his artful adversary had placed him, with a success which, before the conflict, he had not ventured to expect. Eckius happened to affirm that a sort of medium of opinion ought to be held with respect to indulgences. "On the one hand they ought not to be condemned, and, on the other, they should not be entirely RE-

LIED ON:" To the same effect he taught the people in the most public manner. In fact, he seems not to have foreseen, how great an advantage he gave his adversary by this unwary concession. "I had supposed," says Luther, "that this affair of the indulgences would be by far the most difficult point that I should have to manage, and that our disputation would have turned chiefly upon it; whereas it created little or no trouble. I found I could nearly agree to Eckius's explanation. Never on any occasion did papal indulgences receive a more wretched, and unfortunate support. They were treated in a way that almost produced laughter. If the proclaimers of the indulgences had held the same doctrine at the time of vending them, the NAME OF LUTHER would probably have remained unknown. I say, if the people had been informed that the diplomas of indulgence were not to be RELIED ON, these imaginary pardons would have lost all their reputation, and the commissioners, who conducted the sale of them, would have died of hunger."—The acuteness of Luther, as a theological disputant, ready to avail himself of the smallest indiscretion of his adversary, appears very manifest from this instance.

His heart, however, was not in these noisy and contentious scenes. Instruction of youth in divinity, and preaching of the gospel of Christ, he considered as his proper business. He used to lament the peculiar infelicity of the age, by which he was obliged to waste in controversies so many hours, that might have been far better employed in guiding souls into the way of salvation. "How long," cried he, "am I to spend my time and strength in frivolous discussions about indulgences and pontifical authority,—subjects, which have not the remotest tendency to benefit the church, or promote practical godliness?"

That some good might result from the contentions at Leipsic, and that mankind might be less bewildered in the mazes of subtle disputation, this diligent servant of God determined to review carefully all his own positions, which had been the subject of debate in his conference with Eckius, and to publish them with concise explanations, and with arguments in their support, consisting of appeals to scripture and ecclesiastical history. These positions, or, as they were sometimes called, theses or conclusions, amounted, in number, to thirteen, and related chiefly to Roman catholic peculiarities. Several of them, however, gave the author occasion to state and studiously illustrate the scriptural doctrine of GRACE, and the nature of in-dwelling⁶ sin, as described by St.

⁴ Luther's letter to Emser.

⁵ This word, though not a very common one, has been thought, by excellent divines, to express St. Paul's meaning in Romans vii. verse 20. better than any other—"Sin that dwelleth in me."

⁶ Vol. II. Luth. Op. Wit.

⁷ Disput. Leips.

Paul in the seventh chapter to the Romans. In fallen man, he observes, there remains an internal principle of evil, even after he is renewed by the grace of God. Every christian needs daily repentance, because he sins daily,—not indeed by daily perpetrating flagrant crimes, but by falling short of perfect obedience. Hence there is not a just man upon earth, because even in actions that are good in themselves there is precisely so much sin as there is repugnance, or difficulty, or want of cheerfulness in the will. He owns, that divines were accustomed to evade the positive testimony of such passages of scripture, as, 'There is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good and sinneth not;' but, says he, let us listen to St. Paul, 'The good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do.' And again: 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.' Let human reasoning and human authority, whether of the church or of councils, give place and submit: If an angel from heaven should teach the contrary, I would not believe him.

If, continues Luther, the evil principle, called the flesh, prevented the operation of the good principle called the spirit, in a man so holy and full of grace as the apostle Paul, how can our theologians maintain that there is no sin in good works? 'It is not,' say they, 'sin; it is defect, it is infirmity.'—This is an unscriptural and a dangerous way of speaking. In fact, every christian feels a continual conflict between the flesh and the spirit as long as he lives; and therefore in the very best actions there is, in this world, a mixture of the effects of the flesh:—but it is not so in heaven. Wherefore, what knowledge other persons may have derived from the scholastic divinity of the times, it is for them to consider: In regard to myself, I am sure I learnt from it nothing of the real nature of sin, of righteousness, of baptism, or of the whole christian life; nor any thing of the excellency of God or his works, his grace, his justice. Faith, hope, charity, were to me words without meaning. In short, I not only learnt nothing right; but I had to UNLEARN every thing which I had acquired in that way. I shall be much surprised if others have succeeded better; but should there be any such, I sincerely congratulate them.—In the schools I lost Jesus Christ,—I have now found him in St. Paul.

"Search the scriptures" is the precept, which of all others seems to have most deeply impressed the anxious, inquisitive, mind of Luther. And further, in his inquiries, he never forgot that he himself was personally interested in the great truths of revealed religion. He studied the bible, not through curiosity, or the love of fame, but from a sense of the importance of its contents, and

of his own dangerous situation. How little have those understood the real character of this reformer, who have looked on him as a turbulent, ambitious, innovator, impelled by selfish and worldly motives. Nothing can be more affecting than the following account, which he himself gives of his own internal troubles. "However blameless a life I might lead as a monk, I experienced a most uneasy conscience; I perceived myself a sinner before God; I saw that I could do nothing to appease him, and I hated the idea of a just God that punishes sinners. I was well versed in all St. Paul's writings; and, in particular, I had a most wonderful desire to understand the epistle to the Romans. But I was puzzled with the expression, 'THEREIN is the righteousness of God revealed.' My heart rose almost against God with a silent sort of blasphemy: At least in secret I said with great murmur and indignation,—Was it not enough that wretched man, already eternally ruined by the curse of original depravity, should be oppressed with every species of misery through the condemning power of the commandment, but that, even through the GOSPEL, God should threaten us with his anger and justice, and thereby add affliction to affliction? Thus I raged with a troubled conscience. Over and over I turned the above-mentioned passage to the Romans most importunately. My thirst to know the apostle's meaning was insatiable.

"At length, while I was meditating day and night on the words, and their connexion with what immediately follows, namely, 'the just shall live by faith,' it pleased God to have pity upon me, to open mine eyes, and to shew me, that the righteousness of God, which is here said in the gospel to be REVEALED from faith to faith, relates to the method by which God, in his mercy, justifies a sinner through faith, agreeably to what is written, 'the just shall live by faith.' Hence, I felt myself a new man, and all the scriptures appeared to have a new face. I ran quickly through them as my memory enabled me; I collected together the leading terms; and I observed, in their meaning, a strict analogy, according to my new views. Thus, in many instances, the WORK of God means that which he works in us; and the power, and wisdom of God, mean the power and wisdom, which his Spirit operates in the minds of the faithful; and in the same manner are to be understood the PATIENCE, the SALVATION, the GLORY, of God.

"The expression,—'RIGHTEOUSNESS of God,' now became as sweet to my mind as it had been hateful before; and this very passage of St. Paul proved to me the entrance into paradise."

This interesting account of the steps by which Luther was led to evangelical light in the important doctrine of justification by faith evidently refers to what passed in his mind about the time of the celebrated disputation at Leipsic; and for that reason may seem not improperly introduced in this place. One of his conclusions in that contest led to a discussion in faith, repentance, and free-will; and we find, in his defence of that conclusion, a similar mode of argumentation. He even produces the very same passage of St. Paul, from the first chapter to the Romans; and blames divines of the stamp of Eckius, for adding to the words,—‘the just shall live by faith,’—other words, namely, ‘but not by faith ONLY,’ as necessary to prevent mistakes. He quotes also the tenth chapter of the same epistle,—‘with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,’—and takes notice that, likewise in this verse, righteousness is attributed to faith only. “The works of faith,” continues he, “don’t produce the faith, but the faith produces the works. The meaning of the apostle is not, that justified persons neglect good works, but that justification is prior to good works; and that good works can be performed by justified persons only.”

Eckius had maintained that some of the actions of good men, and particularly their last actions in dying, were perfectly free from sin. Luther had too high ideas of the holiness of the divine law, and too deep a sense of the evil of sin, and of the depravity of human nature, to admit this position. Accordingly he opposed it with all his might, and used strong language in support of the contrary sentiment. “There has not,” said he, “for these thousand years been started a more mischievous, pestilential notion, than that God does not demand a perfect fulfilling of all his laws. This is directly to contradict Jesus Christ: God never alters his perfect law; though he pardons us when we break it. Observe, however, he does not pardon those who are asleep, but those who labour, those who fear, and who say with Job, ‘I know thou wilt not hold me innocent.’ Never suppose that God does not require an exact regard to every title of his law; such a notion will soon engender pride and make you despise that grace, through which his holy law, as a schoolmaster, should compel you to seek deliverance.”

One of Eckius’s propositions, concerning the natural powers of the human mind since the fall of our first parents, seemed strongly tinged with Pelagian sentiments; and these were diametrically opposite to Luther’s views of the gospel. In this matter, therefore, he did not confine himself merely to the defence of his own conclusions, but exposed the doctrines of Eckius with force and animation, terming them impious and heretical in

the highest degree, and inconsistent with the apostle Paul, and the whole gospel of Christ. Again he pressed the grand doctrine of christianity, that we are justified, before God, by faith only; he shewed, that this article of belief was the test of orthodoxy or heresy according as it was held soundly or corruptly; that all other points were subordinate and centered in this; and that every objection to it, which could possibly be devised, was done away by this single consideration, namely, that a right faith was necessarily productive of good works. “St. Paul,” says he, “speaks of a living, not a dead faith; for a dead faith is merely a speculative opinion. But, observe how theologians, building on a solitary passage of St. James, in his second chapter, have dared to oppose the whole current of scripture. Mankind are exceedingly prone to place confidence in their own works; hence, the great danger of pharisaical doctrine. On the contrary, if you do but take care to instruct the people properly concerning the nature of pure christian faith, they will then understand the power of such a faith to produce good works; they will see that good works can be produced in no other way; and lastly, that these works are, in fact, the spontaneous and infallible consequence of a right faith.”

The contemplation of the ways of providence,—at all times a rational employment,—is never more instructive than when we can trace the gradual progress of divine light, as it breaks in upon the mind of honest, industrious, inquirers after religious truth. Let not therefore the modern critic, whose ideas of the justification of a sinner may, perhaps, be more exact and digested than those of Luther were at the time of his controversy with Eckius, hastily condemn, or treat with disrespect, the sentiments and explanations which have been laid before him on this essential point. Let him rather, first, advert to the prevailing ignorance and errors of the clergy in the days of the reformer; and then, with pleasure and surprise, he will observe the immense strides, towards a complete system of christian principles, which were taken by an Augustine monk during the year 1519, in the midst of his persecutions; and moreover, on a strict examination, he may be astonished to find how perfectly evangelical also at that time Luther was, in the particular article of justification by faith, as to the substance and general view of this important doctrine. Afterwards he defended and explained it with probably as much accuracy and precision, as most succeeding divines have done, though the question has now been agitated and debated for several centuries.

The rigorous laws of history oblige us not to omit, that Luther, in the same treatise, which contains the defence of his own conclusions against Eckius, hastily expressed a doubt of the divine authority of the epistle

of St. James'. Want of a just insight into the views of the inspired writer may account for this tamerity, but will not excuse it; however, he seems not have insisted on his scruples, much less to have persevered in them. In regard to his misapprehension of the meaning of this part of holy writ, we may be the less wrother, when we reflect, that even the very best modern interpreters of the Bible do not agree, in their explanation of the second chapter to St. James. Luther conceived that chapter to militate against the doctrine of justification by faith. Truth is seldom seen at once in its full order and proportion of parts: But who can doubt that the Saxon reformer was under a divine influence, which daily taught him his natural sinfulness? All men, who know themselves as he did, can never find rest to their consciences but in Christ alone. Necessity, experience, and the word of God, unite in convincing them, that no other way of peace can be found for sinners but through the Redeemer; and, also, that this is the only way by which they can heartily serve God, love their neighbours, and, in general, be fruitful in good works. But more of this important subject hereafter.

In his literary contest with Eckius, Luther apologizes for the inelegance of his style. He confesses that it was negligent and slovenly, and that he had taken no pains to make it accurate, because he had no expectation of immortal fame, nor a desire for it. I am drawn, says he, by force into this contest. I mean, as soon as I can consistently with my conscience, to retire into a corner. Some other person shall appear on the stage, God willing. Such was the real modesty of Luther; and so little did he apprehend, that the less he sought for glory, the more he should attain it.

In fact, the publications of Luther were circulated throughout Germany, and were read with the greatest avidity by all ranks and orders. Eckius and other advocates of the Roman catholic cause answered the heretic with great heat and indignation. Luther replied with the promptitude and precision, and also with the zeal and confidence of a man, who was perfectly master of the arguments on both sides of the questions in dispute, felt deeply interested in the establishment of truth, and had thoroughly examined the foundations of his opposition to the prevailing corruptions. By these means the discussions at Leipsic were detailed with minuteness, and continued with spirit; they everywhere became topics of common conversation; and, as Luther constantly appealed to plain sense, and the written word of God, the scholastic subtleties of Eckius lost their weight and reputation among the people. It is not difficult to see, that the advantages, which,

in this way, the cause of the reformation must have derived from the public contest at Leipsic and its consequences, must have been very considerable.

Particular and important instances might be mentioned.

The elector of Saxony was the only prince who publicly favoured the reformation; and there is good reason to believe, that both his knowledge of the scriptures and his kindness towards Luther was much increased by what he read, and heard from others, relative to the controversy in 1519. It appears from very authentic memoirs by Spalatinus, that the mind of Frederic had been much exercised about divine things, even before his Wittemberg theologian had dared to expose and withstand the corrupt practices of the Roman see. With much diligence and constant prayer he had read the word of God; and was extremely displeased with the usual modes of interpreting it. And when, through the grace of God and the instrumentality of Luther, some rays of evangelical light began to break forth, he opened himself explicitly to his chaplain, Spalatinus, to this effect. "I have always indulged a secret hope, that in a short time we should be blessed with a purer knowledge of what we ought to believe." Meanwhile he gave attention to practical sermons, and read the scriptures with the greatest delight,—especially the four gospels,—from which he collected many excellent passages, and so impressed them on his memory, that whenever occasion required, he could readily apply them with great advantage and comfort. He used particularly to insist on that saying of our Lord in the fifteenth chapter of St. John, "Without me ye can do nothing." "He would dwell on this passage," says Spalatinus, "more than any other. He considered it as decisive against the vulgar notion of free-will; and on this very ground he argued against it, long before Erasmus had dared to publish his miserable, unscriptural, performance on the natural liberty of the human mind." "How can it possibly be," said the prince, "that mankind should be perfectly free from all corrupt bias, when Christ himself says, Without me ye can do nothing."

Such were the reflections, which the disputation at Leipsic, concerning the necessity of GRACE, and the natural condition of man, since the fall of Adam, appear to have produced in the pious mind of Frederic the Wise. While they imply considerable insight into several of the essential doctrines of Christianity, they also throw much light on the religious character of this prince. Frederic had a deep sense of his own weakness and sinfulness;—a never failing preparative this, for the hearty reception of the glad tidings of the gospel! He felt such anxiety that the faith of Christ might be preach-

ed among the people in its purity; and this anxiety kept pace with his own progress in practical religion.—Another excellent symptom of a divine teaching and of truly spiritual affections!—Still this excellent personage remained in bondage to papal authority, and papal superstitions; and hence, though his views of the Bible were in perfect harmony with those of Luther, and though he further agreed with the reformer, that shameful abuses ought to be corrected, dangerous errors exposed, salutary truths propagated, and mankind put into possession of the words of eternal life, he nevertheless continued to feel most disquieting apprehensions lest, in compassing these important purposes, OFFENCE should be given to the majesty of the Roman pontiffs.

It may deserve notice, that soon after the conferences at Leipsic, the elector of Saxony had a severe illness; and that the industrious Luther, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his necessary employments, found time to compose a small tract, for the express purpose of comforting this good prince in his afflictions. The wisdom, the sincerity, and the christian affection, which the author exhibited in this little treatise would, no doubt, have a tendency to increase the estimation in which he was already held by Frederic.

The celebrated Philip Melancthon, who is always numbered among the most illustrious and respectable instruments of the reformation, was actually present at the public disputations with Eckius. Some say, that he placed himself near Carolstadt and suggested so many things to him during the combat, that Eckius called out to him, "Philip, hold your tongue, mind your own business; and don't interfere with mine." However, he himself tells us, that he was a mere spectator and hearer; and that he sat among the crowd. As the dispute continued many days, the different accounts might, perhaps, appear sufficiently consistent, were we acquainted with all the circumstances. Melancthon concludes one of his letters to Oecolampadius in the following manner: "Eckius was much admired for his many and striking ingenuities. You know Carolstadt; he is certainly a man of worth and of extraordinary erudition. As to Luther, whom I have long known most intimately, his lively

genius, his learning, and eloquence, are the objects of my admiration; and it is impossible not to be in love with his truly sincere and pure christian spirit."

As the reader by this time must be tolerably acquainted with the ecclesiastical combat at Leipsic, it will be unnecessary to detain him any longer with particulars from Melancthon's report of that famous controversy. The name of this great man is here introduced, chiefly for the purpose of showing, how the Roman catholic expectations of the effect of the ostentatious challenge of Eckius were frustrated in every way. Melancthon was then only about twenty-three years of age; and as yet, had employed his time principally in the duties of his Greek professorship and in the cultivation of general literature. Already, indeed, he had favoured Luther's intentions of teaching pure christianity and of delivering it from the reigning darkness and superstition; but his wishes in this respect had hitherto originated in the native candour and benevolence of his temper, and in his abhorrence of all disguise, artifice and tyranny, rather than in any distinct insight which he had acquired into particular instances of the corruption of christian doctrine, or of the shameful practices of the ecclesiastical domination. The conferences at Leipsic seem to have had a mighty effect in first determining this elegant scholar to employ his talents in the study of theology. As Melancthon is said to have possessed the rare faculty of "discerning truth in its most intricate connections and combinations," it was not probable that such a person should be moved either by the flimsy objections of Eckius, or by his pompous display of scholastic arguments. He was not, however, blind to the dangerous influence of a man, who had some pretensions to learning, who had a strong memory, and who, being constantly impelled by ambitious hopes of advancement, and unrestrained by modesty or conscience, was ever ready to make the most positive assertions. In listening to the sophistry of this papal advocate, Melancthon became better acquainted than before with the argumentative resources of the Romish religion; at the same time that the solid reasonings of Luther, supported by constant appeals to the scriptures, effectually convinced his mind of the soundness of the principles of his industrious and persecuted friend, and determined him to embark, in the cause of religious liberty, with zeal and fidelity. From the period of this famous public disputation, he applied himself most intensely to the interpretation of the scriptures, and the defence of pure christian doctrine; and he is justly esteemed by protestants to have been, under divine providence, the most powerful coadjutor of the Saxon reformer. His mild and peaceable temper, his aversion

J The opinion, which Erasmus entertained of this little tract, is expressed in a letter, written several years after, to the bishop of Basil. "I send you a little book, of which Luther is the author. It is divided into fourteen heads, and is extremely approved, even by those, who, in general, have the greatest possible aversion to his doctrines. He wrote it before matters came to the present extremities. The man has been enraged by hostile treatment; I heartily wish that, by the means of friendly admonitions, he might be brought back to moderate sentiments."

Seckendorf observes on this extract from Erasmus, "The disease of the church at that time was not of such a nature, that it could be cured by any of Erasmus' plasters."

to schismatic contention, his reputation for piety and for knowledge, and above all, his happy art of exposing error and maintaining truth in the most perspicuous language,—all these endowments concurred to render him eminently serviceable to the revival of the religion of Christ. Little did Eckius imagine, that the public disputation, in which he had foreseen nothing but victory, and exultation, and the downfall of Lutheranism, would give rise to another theological champion, who should contend for christian truth and christian liberty with the primitive spirit of an apostle. At Wittenberg, Melancthon had probably been well acquainted with Luther's lectures on divinity; but it was in the citadel of Leipsic, that he heard the Romish tenets defended by all the arguments that ingenuity could devise; there his suspicions were strengthened respecting the evils of the existing hierarchy; and there his righteous spirit was roused to imitate, in the grand object of his future inquiries and exertions, the indefatigable endeavours of his zealous and adventurous friend.

The pious reader will not think this relation tedious. In the event and consequences of the ecclesiastical conflict between the Romish and the Protestant advocates he will see much cause to adore the wisdom and goodness of that Being, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."^a

ERASMUS.—It is a most unpleasant circumstance belonging to the history of this great man, that the longer he lives, the lower he sinks in the estimation of the christian reader. It is in the beginning of the reformation, while he was exposing the scandalous practices of the indolent, debauched, avaricious clergy, that he appears to the greatest advantage. But when Luther and his associates began to preach boldly the gospel of Christ in its purity, Erasmus instantly shrunk; and not only ceased to be a coadjutor of the reformers, but became gradually their peevish and disgusted adversary. With inconceivable address and management, he steadily trode, as long as he could, his favourite middle path of pleasing both sides; but when the contention grew sharp, when the doctrines of grace were found to offend the great and the powerful; and when persecution was at the door, the cautious, evasive system was no longer practicable; Erasmus was called upon to decide; and there could be little doubt to which party a character of his stamp would incline.

When we divest ourselves of prejudice, and view Erasmus as the most elegant scholar of his age, admired, and courted by prin-

ces, popes, and dignified ecclesiastics, we are compelled to admit, that his temptation to support the established hierarchy was very great; and it is to be lamented that he had not a clearer and a more affecting insight into the deceitfulness of the human heart. If he had understood more of men's natural alienation from God by the FALL, and had had a deeper practical sense of the evil of sin in his own case, he would have felt weary and heavy laden; he would have sought more diligently for deliverance from internal guilt and misery; he would have been more disposed to resist temptations of every sort, and particularly those sins that easily beset him; and lastly, though he might still have differed from Luther in subordinate matters or modes of expression, he would have had the same general views of the nature of the redemption by Christ Jesus; and instead of raising captious objections against the doctrines of grace, and quarrelling with the man, whom Providence had ordained to be the instrument of their revival, he would have applied those blessed, healing, truths to the distresses of his own conscience, and would have rejoiced in that "burning and shining light" which arose amidst the thick darkness of papal ignorance and superstition.

In one word; the different sentiments, which these great men entertained, of the leading doctrines of the gospel, was the real cause of their unhappy contention; every circumstance of which may be traced to this single source. And no wonder; for it seems almost impossible that a warm and cordial attachment should long subsist between persons, who zealously support contrary notions of the way of eternal salvation. It is true, that where the natural tempers are mild and ingenuous, many causes of irritation will be avoided or suppressed; and it is true also, that where divine grace is powerful, the affections of meekness, kindness, and forbearance will abound and be in vigorous exercise. But after all that can be said or imagined, there will still be such an essential difference of the spiritual taste, such an opposition of the judgment, and such a dissimilitude in the whole turn of thinking, that separation, not coalescence, dissension, not agreement, is to be looked for under such circumstances.

One cannot reflect on these things without much concern. The cause of disunion, here pointed at, is of very extensive operation in practice, and might be exemplified in many lamentable instances, as well as in the unfriendly strife between Luther and Erasmus.

From the foregoing observations concerning Erasmus, the student of the History of the Church of Christ will be led to expect FURTHER documents relative both to his re-

^a Ephes. chap. i. verse 11.

ligious sentiments, and to the part which he acted during the progress of the reformation. The facts which are at present before the reader, it must be owned, do not convict that cautious and artful disputant, of any decided opposition to a change in the ecclesiastical system, or of any settled alienation of mind from the reformer. On the contrary, they must rather be considered, in the main, as favourable both to Luther and to his doctrines. Yet, enough has appeared already to raise considerable suspicions respecting the staunch orthodoxy of his faith, and the honest simplicity and disinterestedness of his intentions.

We conclude with the substance of a passage extracted from one of his little controversial tracts. The quotation, though but short, is of itself sufficiently characteristic to furnish satisfactory evidence, that Erasmus differed very materially from Luther in his ideas of the importance of certain scriptural doctrines, and also of the existing contest with the Romish hierarchy.

"If," says he, "I were called upon to suffer for the truth of the gospel, I should not refuse to die; but as yet I have no disposition to suffer death for Luther's paradoxes. The present disputes are not concerning articles of faith; but,—whether the pope's supremacy is of Christ's appointment;—whether the order of cardinals is a necessary part of the church;—whether there is Christ's authority for the practice of confession;—whether free will contributes to salvation;

—whether faith alone puts a man into a state of salvation;—whether the mass can in any sense be called a sacrifice.—On account of these points, which are the usual subjects of the scholastic contentions, I would neither endanger my own life, nor venture to take away the life of another.—During our endless quarrels,—whether any HUMAN WORKS should be denominated GOOD, the consequence is, we produce no good works.—While we are contending whether faith alone without works puts a man into a state of salvation," we neither reap the fruits of faith nor the reward of good works. Besides, there are some things of such a nature, that, though they were ever so true, they ought not to be mentioned in the hearing of the people; for example,—That free will is nothing but an unmeaning term; That ANY person may do the office of a priest, and has the power of remitting sins; and of consecrating the body of our Lord;—That justification is by FAITH ALONE;—and that our works are of no use for that end. What can be the effect of throwing out such paradoxical doctrines as these before the vulgar, but schism and sedition."

This language is so perfectly intelligible, that it cannot be necessary to add any remarks by way of elucidation.

¹ Confer salutem.

² Ibid.

³ Sola fide conferri justitiam, opera nostra nihil ad rem facere.

⁴ Erasmi. Purg. ad camp. Mutton.

MILNER's labour in the compilation of his Church History, on which he had bestowed much pains and research, unfortunately terminates at the most important period of Luther's life—at a time when he may have been said, in some measure, to "halt between two opinions." His attachment to, and veneration for, the religion in which he had been brought up, is evidently apparent; and there can be no doubt, that although he professed himself ready, rather to suffer for the truth's sake, than violate a "good conscience," yet his understanding, at this time, not being sufficiently enlightened, he was willing to sacrifice many points, which to us appear both absurd and ridiculous, in the service of the Romish Church, in order to convince, as he says himself, that it was far from his desire ever to separate from that communion. But his discussions with the papal advocates led to more deep examination of the sacred scriptures; and their true intent and meaning becoming more and more developed to him, his boldness in asserting and defending, not only the right, but the necessity, of every man, to regulate his conduct by the unerring standard of the revealed word of God, became firm and intrepid.

Milner just ends at the time when his famous disputation with Eckius concluded; and when a second, but ineffectual, attempt was made by the Papal See, through Miltitz, a more polished and subtle agent than Cajetan, to bring him back to the bosom of the Romish Church.—We now proceed, in order to make our work complete, to continue the History down nearly to the present time, as it is narrated by the learned and excellent Dr. HAWES; taking it up exactly at the period where Milner leaves off.

After detailing the disputation between Luther and Eckius, he notices Melancthon in the same praiseworthy terms which are bestowed upon him by Milner. He says:—

THE amiable and gentle Melancthon was among the auditors of this renowned dispute. He had before approved of Luther's scriptural mode of treating theological subjects, and this great conflict confirmed him in the rectitude of the positions, which Luther maintained. For ever afterwards he ranked on the side of the reformers; though his yielding temper, his love of peace, and some educational prejudices respecting church unity and schism, led him sometimes into concessions injurious to the cause which he defended. Naturally of a timorous spirit, he dreaded the consequences of division; but in an hour of danger no man looked death in the face with greater intrepidity. He was a character more suited to a peaceable state of the Church, than to bustle and contend in the days of difficulty and turbulence.

As noble a monument of faithfulness in the cause of God and truth had already sprung up in Switzerland, Zuinglius. Though not alike famed with the German reformer, he may justly rank his equal in piety, in learning his superior. He had from early youth been shocked at the established superstitions around him, and having devoted himself to the Church, he began before Luther, to explain the scriptures to the people, and to censure with great fidelity, though with becoming temper, the errors of the church of Rome. His scientific attainments and holy conversation commanded the distinguishing respect of his countrymen, and he was early advanced to a stall in the church of Zurich, where his example was as eminently good as his abilities and labours were confessedly great. The very causes which roused the zeal of Luther, acted upon him in a similar way, and on the like occasion. An impudent Italian was carrying on the same shameful traffic of indulgences, and met with as warm an opposer in Zuinglius, as Tetzel had found in Luther. Nor was he a man of a less intrepid spirit, though tempered with greater self-command, and in point of extensive knowledge, as it appears by his works, pre-eminent. To him Switzerland was chiefly indebted for the light of the gospel; and his vigorous exhortations engaged the magistracy to cast off the yoke of Rome, and assert their liberty.

While thus the holy flame was kindling at different corners of the earth; and the wiles of the crafty as well as the arm of power employed to extinguish it, Eckius, infuriated with rage, hasted to Rome, and backed by all the influence of the Dominicans and the Inquisitors, carried to Leo his bitter accusations against Luther, and urged the necessity of suppressing so dangerous a heretic by the papal anathemas, before the contagion should spread too wide to admit of a remedy. Leo, too indolent to resist the importunities of those who surrounded him, and flattered by the confidence of the facility with which he might silence this troublesome reformer, signed the bull which fulminated excommunication against Luther's person, and ordered the ignominious burning of all his writings, sixty days respite only were allowed him to abjure, repent, and cast himself on the mercy of the pontiff.

Luther, whom the gentle treatment of Miltitz might have won, was filled with indignation, when this sentence was notified to him. And having taken a decided resolution, he determined to separate from the Romish communion, and to do it in the most public manner, in order to testify his contempt of the pope and his authority, whilst he renewed his appeal to the next general council for his justification. Before the sixty days therefore were expired, he summoned a vast concourse of all ranks, curious to be present at so singular a ceremony, and kindling a fire, he by the hands of the hangman committed to it in presence of them all, the pope's bull, with the sacerdotal code of canons and decretals, as renouncing henceforth all authority of Rome and her pontiffs; a step suited to his daring spirit: and wise as undaunted. Temporising measures were as uncongenial to the man, as ill-suited to the object he had in view (1520). He wished to rouse a spirit of resolute opposition to these tyrannical mandates; to show they might be despised with impunity: whilst by his appeal to a general council, he interested in his favour all who regarded that as the supreme judge of controversy; agreeably to what had been decided at the councils of Basil and Constance. Thus his renunciation of Leo's authority, prevented

not his professing firm attachment to the Catholic Church, and readiness to abide by the impartial decisions of an unprejudiced council.

A second bull, as soon as the sixty days expired, sealed the final damnation of the obstinate heretic; and met the same contempt as the former. Indeed so far from intimidating the zealous reformer, it sharpened his resentment, and roused him to more vigorous exertions, to rescue from these unchristian procedures a body of his countrymen, sufficient to erect a barrier against his enemies, and to form a church more resembling the apostolic model in doctrine, and discipline, than that which he had formally renounced. Happily he found a number of the ablest scholars, as well as most excellent men of the age, ready to join in the necessary reform, to which the weight of Melancthon's influence greatly contributed. The more the subject was canvassed, the more the groundless pretensions of the papacy were detected; and the frauds and superstitions of its supporters brought to light, and exposed to the people; who received with avidity the doctrine of the reformers, and formed a phalanx around them, which defended them from their bloody pursuers. Nor were the princes of the empire, catholic as they were, averse to see some of the pontifical claims disputed; whilst Frederic of Saxony, who had embraced the truth, taught by Luther and his colleagues, afforded them all the protection in his power, without committing himself entirely as a partisan.

Charles the Fifth of Spain (1519), raised to the imperial throne chiefly by the zeal and favour of Frederic, in opposition to his competitor Francis the First, King of France, was unwilling to disoblige a friend, to whom he was so greatly indebted, and therefore, though hard pressed by the pope to seize and execute this daring rebel against authority, Charles at the request of Frederic consented, that Luther should be judged by a German tribunal; for which purpose, a diet of the princes ecclesiastical and temporal assembled at Worms (1521). There the culprit, fenced with a safe conduct from the Emperor, boldly appeared in person to plead his own cause, before that august assembly. Many of his friends dreading the encounter; fearing his own impetuosity would provoke enmity; and knowing the savage cruelty of his judges, ready to violate the safe conduct, in order to glut their revenge, as in the case of Huss and Jerome, dissuaded him from appearing: but his confidence in the goodness of his claims made him court rather than shun such a public opportunity of pleading the cause of God and truth: and his courage engaged him fearlessly to declare, that, "if he met

as many devils at Worms, as there were tiles on the houses, they should not deter him from his duty.

Yet he charmed his friends as much as he confounded his enemies, by the firmness and temperance of his defence, as well as by the eloquence and force of argument which he displayed on this occasion. Charles, who was compelled to flatter Leo, sought by every soothing caress and earnest solicitation to engage Luther to submit to the pope. But when he found him inflexible, he menaced him with all the wrath of Rome and the empire. The undaunted champion firmly, but coolly replied, that, "whenever his opinions were proved erroneous, from the word of God, and his conduct criminal against Christ or his Church, he would ask nothing more to testify the deepest humiliation; but till then, no man had a right to censure or condemn him." The Emperor, too generous to violate his safe conduct, permitted him to depart: but the unanimous suffrage of the diet denounced the most condign punishment on the obstinate heretic; and on all who should entertain, support, or conceal him; deciding absolutely, that *the pope was the sole judge of religious controversy in the Christian world.* A tenet so expressly contrary to the Germanic liberties, and the received councils, as shocked many of those who would not at all have cared about the case of such an inconsiderable individual.

His kind friend and protector Frederic, who dreaded the consequence of Luther's falling into the hands of his enemies, contrived to waylay him as he returned from the diet; and seized by men in masks, who were in the secret, he was carried off to the castle of Wartenberg, and hid for ten months from all pursuit and discovery. There he employed his leisure and retirement in translating the New Testament, and keeping up the spirit of his friends by letters. His disappearing in this sudden manner raised a strong suspicion of his being made away with by his enemies, and tended to increase the general odium of the people against them; whilst his zealous disciples exerted themselves with greater activity than ever, in spreading the principles of the reformation; to which the absence of the emperor Charles, whom his own political engagements called away from Germany, greatly contributed. He had indeed at that time providentially too many immediate concerns of importance to himself to occupy his attention, and no leisure to arrest the progress of reformation.

Carlostadt, the friend and colleague of Luther, during his retirement at Wartenberg, took the lead in the work of reformation; and as its progress was rapid, he improved the advantage of the influence which he had acquired, and resolved to cast down

the images which had been so long the objects of popular adoration in the churches, and to expel the idolatrous mass. His own intemperate zeal, or rather that of his followers, is said to have occasioned much matter of offence, by proceeding in too tumultuary a manner. Luther himself sharply condemned their proceedings; and unable to lie any longer concealed, whilst Carlostadt was thus daring to oppose the papal abuses, he left his hiding place, and set himself again at the head of the reformed.

Some have charged Carlostadt with temerity, and Luther with envy at his activity, and with jealousy lest he should supplant him in the public opinion. And nothing is more probable than that they were men of like passions with ourselves: we plead for no faultless monsters of monkish perfection; but good men as Carlostadt, might expect to have their zeal branded with intemperance; and the spirit of Luther in his retirement might surely be roused by a nobler principle than envy, to return to the work openly, and put his life in his hand. He might also reasonably fear, that a too precipitate conduct would injure the cause which they had equally at heart; or they might differ in opinion, without evil. I confess, I have always honoured Carlostadt, as a zealous instrument in the reformation: in learning he was Luther's equal, in some of his opinions respecting the Eucharist, more scriptural, and only beneath him in that commanding popularity of address, which no man of that day possessed like Luther.

During these commotions, one great character, which all desired to draw over to their party, conscious of the weight of his influence, maintained a suspicious neutrality. Erasmus, whom the keenness of his wit, the acuteness of his genius, and the depth of his learning, raised to the pinnacle of universal admiration, had, before Luther arose, begun to sharpen the shafts of ridicule against the monkish ignorance and abuses; by his writings he had greatly loosened the shackles of blind veneration for the mendicant tribes, and prepared men's minds for the reformation. To him, Luther, Melancthon, and other reformers, warmly addressed themselves. He answered them with all civility, but with the most wary caution not to commit himself as a favourer of their cause; though he professed to admit the chief doctrines which they promulgated, and to acknowledge the necessity of a reform, to which no man had more contributed by their writings than himself. Yet he dreaded a rupture with the pontiff; and flattered himself the object would be accomplished by the necessity of the case, without violence. He would have been content with some concessions, and trembled at the rude hand of hasty

reform. His study and books delighted him more than the activity of a labourer in the vineyard: and his temper indisposed him for the stormy ocean, which Luther dared to brave. He professed a high veneration for the bold reformer; and though he shunned all intimacy that would have exposed him to reproach, he did not scruple to condemn the injustice and folly of the treatment which Luther had received from Leo; and plainly manifested his apprehensions, that the enmity of the sacerdotal tribe, more than any real errors of the monk, was the cause of his condemnation. He dreaded also, that the precipitation of Luther would bring him to an untimely end, as it had done so many preceding witnesses for the truth; and that the consequences would be fatal to the cause: and probably the cowardice of his own spirit made him fear to be involved in the dangers which he apprehended. He maintained a cautious reserve on the subject of Luther's writings, and though he condemned the man, because the Church had condemned him, and censured the violence of his proceedings, he declined answering the reformer, to which he was greatly urged, and left that honour to the Universities, the Dominicans, and Franciscans; pretending unwillingness to rob them of the glory. In fact, in all essential doctrines, Erasmus was with the reformers; and saw as clearly the necessity of correcting the abuses which prevailed in the church of Rome. But he was a man of a studious turn and timid spirit; and however much his mind inclined to one side, his dread of consequences bent him as much to the other, and kept him suspended between the attracting magnets. Thus, feared by both parties, cordially loved by neither, suspected by all, he obtained not the favour of Rome, but was left to languish in indigence; and he shared none of the glory of reformation, by meanly shrinking from the cross. A great man, a good man, an admired man; but not daring to take a decided part, he remained the victim of his own cautious timidity.

Luther's translation of the bible had now circulated like the sun, through Germany, and cast a flood of light upon the benighted minds of men. His works were diffused through Christendom. England and the Low Countries received vast edification from them. They fanned the fires which had been there previously kindled, though kept under by the strong arm of authority and clerical tyranny. The Saxons, and many of their neighbours, had taken the liberty to reform their own abuses. The impious mass was abolished; the convents evacuated; and the priests chose a wife, a sister, to live in the holy estate of marriage, instead of unnatural and criminal celibacy. The chief of the reformers set the example, and

were quickly followed by the multitude of their brethren.

A host of authors now arose to overwhelm the daring reformer with their arguments, or their invectives. Among these the eminence of his station has made the king of England most remarkable; gained by the flatteries of the pope and his own clergy, arrogant in his nature, cruel, a tyrant, and friend to tyranny of every sort, he could bear no resistance to established authority: withal a bigotted catholic, and only driven by his impetuous and criminal passions to quarrel with the holy see, when in compliance with the emperor it presumed to thwart his violence and gratifications. England had happily, since the days of Wickliff, possessed a precious seed that was to the Lord for a generation; and the records which remain in the registers of the unchristian and cruel bishops of that day, demonstrate the frequent charges of heresy: the abjuration of some, and the burning of others, afford complete conviction that the light had not been extinct in our Israel. Tenterden, in Kent, is particularly noticed. Even in the days of Richard the Second, an act of parliament specifies the numerous followers of Wickliff, who preached in many places, *churches, churchyards, and markets, without license of the ordinary*. A most heretical deed! These continued to afford continual matter for broiling, to the bishops and spiritual courts: and though nothing could extinguish the light in Israel, the faithful few were driven into concealment to avoid the dangers which threatened them on detection, or if but suspected, that they had Wickliff's bible in their houses, and presumed to search the scriptures daily. Yet multitudes were found approving that great reformer; and no sooner were the writings of Luther sent over, than they were read with avidity; and in London, and in many other places, produced such manifest effects, as to awaken the vigilance and accusations of the sacerdotal tribe, whose craft was in danger; to rouse the alarm of the spread of heresy; and to call forth the most vigorous exertions to suppress its progress. The haughty Henry VIII., the ambitious Wolsey, and the whole bench of prelates, united in their determination to to consume with fire all the opponents of papal supremacy: and the King, in the abundance of his soul, undertook, himself, to write a confutation of Luther's "*Babylonish Captivity*:" with a defence of the Romish church, and the catholic faith. This royal volume, presented with great pomp to Leo, procured for the zealous monarch, the golden perfumed rose of papal benediction; and the great and mighty title of *Defender of the Faith*, in which Henry peculiarly gloried (1521).

Luther, whose feelings were as keen as his spirit was elevated, looked down upon the puny, popish, monarchical champion, and answered him with a contempt and asperity, which many condemned as disrespectful to majesty, but which Luther vindicated. No respect of persons, in controversy, was due to a king more than to another man, who dared to blaspheme the King of kings, and to tarnish the glory of his person and gospel.

In the midst of this turbid state of the church (1522), Leo X. departed to give an account of himself at a higher tribunal; and left his successor Adrian VI., to endeavour to compose a contest, which his rashness and imprudence had set on foot.

Adrian had been Charles's tutor, and a man of singular probity. He was favoured by him in the conclave, and raised to the see by his influence. He saw and lamented the disorders of the clergy. He made some feeble attempts to reform them. The disease was too inveterate. Less happy, as he declared, on the papal throne, than in his professor's chair at Louvain, he bore the load of dignity with reluctance, and quickly devolved the burden on one more suited to the politics of the tiara.

The diet at Nuremberg was assembled in the absence of the emperor (1523), to compose the disturbances to which the reformation had given occasion. Adrian sent thither his legate; but, on his demise, Clement VI. selected a man more congenial with his own spirit, the famous Cardinal Campegio, of whom England has heard so much. He breathed against Luther and his adherents nothing but threatnings and slaughter; and blamed the tardy lenity of the princes, that had neglected to enforce the decisions of the diet at Worms. They, on the contrary, presented a long list of their grievances; and prohibited all changes in ecclesiastical matters, till a general council should be assembled to decide the points in controversy. A general council was a word of odious omen in the ears of the Roman pontiff, and equally dreaded as Luther himself.

It is painful amidst the glories of the rising reformation, to record the disputes which broke out among the reformers themselves, and greatly retarded their progress (1524). The controversy began between Luther and Carlostadt, about the manner in which the body and blood of Christ were to be regarded in the Eucharist. Though Luther had rejected the monstrous doctrine of *transubstantiation*, he supported one little less absurd; that Christ was in the sacrament after consecration, by a *real presence*, as heat in iron when ignited. This has received the name *consubstantiation*. Carlostadt embraced the simpler and more scriptural idea,

that the bread and wine were only *signs* and *symbols*; and in this he was cordially supported by the able Zuinglians. The obstinacy of Luther's character is indefensible. He claimed the authority to dictate, which he was himself so averse to allow the pope. Bitterness of controversy, indeed, ill became such men; nor was the subject of dispute worthy such a contest; which terminated in a schism, unhealed unto this day. Let us drop a tear over human infirmity: learn by experience to bear and forbear; and remember always, that the best of men are but men at the best.

Another and most grievous scourge arose collaterally from the spreading light of truth. The peasants, grievously oppressed and enslaved with emancipation from spiritual bondage, received a taste for civil liberty, and detected many gross abuses of the power of their tyrannical nobles. And who can deny that real oppressions were at the bottom of their just complaints? Two famous, or infamous shall I call them, malecontents, set themselves at the head of the irritated peasants, and for a long while wasted the empire with fire and sword. *Muenter* and *Stork* were Anabaptists, and swayed by popular talents the credulous multitude to follow their banners. A battle, in which they were defeated, and their leaders put to death, for a while appeased the troubles which they had occasioned, though the sect was not suppressed by the executions of their chiefs, but subsists to this day.

Luther, at whose door the Catholics laid every commotion, defended himself victoriously; and addressed the insurgents to recover them by argument, in vain. The strong arm of power alone could subdue them. Among this host of peasants all were not fanatic, nor of ill intentions. Many were deceived by their leaders, and sought only exemptions from burthens too heavy to be borne. As far as religious tenets entered into their views, the abuses of the hierarchy made them covet, and profess to seek a purer and more apostolic establishment. But, as in all confusions is the case, when once the barrier of authority is cast down, a deluge of unintended evils rushes in, and desolates the soil, which the reformers purposed to improve. Whilst man is the corrupted creature the scriptures describe him, it is hardly possible but that offences should come; the woe remains with those who give occasion to them.

Frederic, *the Wise* (1525), departing during these commotions, left his brother John, the successor to his dominions, and the head of the Lutheran cause. Frederic had always acted with singular moderation; and though he protected the fervent reformer from all his enemies, he did not wholly

break with Rome. He hoped by gentle methods to obtain relief from all the miseries complained of, without a schism being made in the Church. John was of a different mind. Sensible of the pride and unyielding obstinacy of Rome and her pontiffs, he thought, for the honour of the cause, he could not take too decided a part; and therefore, by his own authority, undertook to regulate all ecclesiastical matters within the extent of his jurisdiction. Luther and Melancthon were employed to draw up a code of ecclesiastical directory for Saxony and its dependencies; and the churches were furnished with the most faithful and wise pastors that could be found, in the place of those who had dishonoured their sacred profession by their immoralities, or continued to maintain obedience to a foreign potentate. Many of the princes and free cities followed the example of the elector, John; and thus first a complete Lutheran establishment was erected through a considerable part of the empire, and the yoke of Rome broken from their necks.

But neither the pope, the emperor, nor the catholic princes, could look on unconcerned spectators of these dreaded innovations. Temporal interests, as well as religious zeal, roused them to concert the means of preventing the spreading evil. This concert of the catholics, and their designs, were not hid from the Lutheran abettors; and they resolved on a plan of union and self-defence, if the necessities of the times and the attacks of their enemies should oblige them to repel force with force. Happily, the political situation of Charles the Fifth suspended for a while the storm which was ready to burst; and each party rested on their arms.

A diet held at Spire (1526), where Ferdinand, the brother of Charles, presided, separated with an agreement, that every prince should order ecclesiastical matters in his own dominions, as he judged best; till a general council should be assembled, to decide upon the controverted subjects. Than this resolution, nothing could be more favourable to the cause of reformation; which only asked peace and tolerance to prosper. Another providential circumstance had happened: the fears of the pope having led him to embrace the interests of Francis the First, after the battle of Pavia, and to form a league against the preponderating influence of the emperor in Italy. On this, Charles became cool in the prosecution of the protestants; besieged and took the pope prisoner; and amidst these conflicts of the superior powers, the poor protestants in Germany had leisure, and opportunity, to cement their union, and to strengthen themselves against all future opposition (1527).

But Charles had no sooner carried his

designs in Italy into effect, and humbled Clement to submission, than he made a treaty with the pontiff, in which the destruction of the protestants was designed, and the establishment of the dominion of Charles in Germany a principal object. To this end, a second diet was convoked at Spire, where the emperor caused the former resolutions to be rescinded by a *majority*; though they had been before decreed *unanimously*; and, till a general council should be assembled, he forbade any change to be admitted from the Romish established religion (1529).

The elector of Saxony, the prince of Hesse, and the other Lutheran supporters, nobles and ecclesiastics, perceived the snare that was laid for them. If no alteration was allowed, till sanctioned by a general council, they saw the cause of Lutheranism must be desperate. They therefore entered their solemn protest against the resolution of the diet; and resolved to maintain the changes they had made. From this protest, they have ever since, with all who rejected the papal government, received the denomination of PROTESTANTS (1529).

The protestant princes notified to the emperor, by their ambassadors, the resolutions which they had adopted; but Charles, by insolently arresting these representatives of their sovereigns, bid them be on their guard against the designs formed against them; and unite for mutual defence. But alas! the differences of opinion which prevailed among them, prevented their coming to a decisive resolution. And a conference at Murburg, to settle these differences between the protestant divines, especially on the article of the *real presence*, produced no change in the sentiments of the disputants. Œcolampadius and Zuinglius, opposed Luther and Melancthon: and whilst the former refuted all the charges laid against them, to the conviction of their opponents, in the grand articles of dispute respecting the eucharist, there is at this day little doubt on which side the truth was found. But Luther was a man not given to yield. All that could be gained, was, to bear with each other in the points of difference; and to wait till God, by the word of his truth and spirit, should give them clearer discoveries of his mind in the controverted points.

The emperor's approach, for a moment, turned all their thoughts to the diet at Augsburg, which he meant to attend after so long an absence. At an interview with the pope by the way, he urged the necessity of calling a general council. But that crafty prelate too much dreaded to commit his authority to such an assembly, and under such an emperor. Clement urged him therefore to execute upon the heretics, deserved vengeance, as became a dutiful son of the

church. The matter, however, did not appear to Charles so easy of accomplishment; and he relished not the injustice of condemning men unheard: his dissatisfaction, therefore, with the pontiff, was as great as Clement's displeasure at not seeing the fires for burning the heretics already kindled.

Meantime, the elector of Saxony, to prevent misrepresentations, and to make the emperor perfectly master of the subject in dispute, enjoined Luther, Melancthon, and other divines, to draw up a clear summary of the protestant doctrines. This produced the famed Confession of Augsburg, ever since appealed to as the standard of protestantism. In awful suspense both parties awaited the result of this assembly, and prepared their forces for the contest, whether of the pen, the tongue, or the sword (1530).

The reformation had by this time made a wonderful progress on every side.

Denmark and Norway, under one of the greatest monsters who ever swayed a sceptre, had received early the Lutheran doctrine. It happened to be, politically, highly desirable to Christiern II., among other objects, in his way to despotic power, to humble the clergy; who had engrossed the wealth of half the kingdom, and desired to usurp influence over the whole. To sap the foundation of their power, he invited Reinard, a convert of Carlstadt, and afterwards that reformer himself, to visit him. These laid the foundations of the reformation in Denmark. Advancing with hasty strides under royal patronage, it was alike favoured by his successor; and in the course of a few years, the final change was accomplished, and popery, root and branch, overturned in the diet of Odensee, in 1559, under the reign of Christiern the Third, and the ministry of the celebrated Bugenhagius, the faithful disciple of Luther.

The great Gustavus Vasa (1527), who, from the depths of the mines of Dalecarlia, rose to the throne of Sweden by the suffrages of his countrymen, as the just reward of his patriotism; not only rescued their bodies from the tyrannical yoke of Christiern, but their souls from the more dreadful bondage of popery. During his conflicts with the Danes for liberty, two noble champions, Olaus Petri, and his brother, had set up the standard of truth in Sweden, and all men flocked to it. The German auxiliaries who came to his help, brought also the Lutheran faith, and bibles with them. And as the bitterest enemies of their country, and the partisans of Denmark and Rome were found in the prelatical order, who possessed the chief strength, wealth, and power in the kingdom, after the massacre of Stockholm, it became absolutely necessary to humble their insolence, and clip the wings of their ambition, before the liberties of Sweden

could be fixed on a durable basis. Vasa, whose interest exactly coincided with his inclinations, encouraged with all his weight of influence and authority, these zealous reformers: and on the settlement of the kingdom, the fabric of popery was utterly demolished, and a purer evangelical establishment fixed, through the labours of Olaus and his colleagues.

Yet, in Sweden and Norway, they followed a model different in government from the Germanic churches, and preserved the order of bishops and archbishops; though their enormous revenues were abridged, and all their fortified castles and civil power devolved to the crown, the proper possessor of them. In Denmark, the very name of bishop fell with their sees, and *superintendents*, with episcopal privileges, presided in their ecclesiastical councils. That these changes met with violent opposition, may be supposed. Men who had to defend their dignities, their wealth, besides the prejudices of education, did not easily yield; and often exposed themselves to violence and oppression. Great alterations are seldom or ever brought about without very blameable acts of authority in the ruling party. Let no man vindicate abuses in the cause of protestantism, whilst he pleads against them in the hand of popery.

The great master of the Teutonic order, (1539), the ancestor of the present kings of Prussia, following the example of Luther and the reformers, took to himself a wife, and set up the Lutheran profession through Prussia, Magdeburg, and the dominions which he possessed in the North.

Nor could France avoid the infection. Even at court, many of the nobility espoused the new doctrines, and a vast multitude embraced the Protestant faith, notwithstanding the bitter enmity which Francis I. is said to have expressed against it, and which always rankled in his heart. His political interests compelling him to unite sometimes with the protestant princes in Germany, they engaged him to a momentary reluctant toleration of their brethren in France. But his connections with the pope, and his own inclinations, often led him to indulge his bigotry, in committing the Protestants to the flames, and suppressing the profession of the gospel, by the most atrocious acts of cruelty and oppression. It was to escape the sword of this persecutor, that the famed Calvin, a name, never to be mentioned by a Protestant but with reverence, fled to Basil, where he published that noble defence of the evangelical doctrine, in a treatise, called *Christian Institutes*, dedicated to his persecutor, and admired for its latinity, as well as force of argument.

Calvin was a native of Picardy; he was intended for the church; but, in compliance

with his father's wishes, applied himself to the law. The reigning controversies early engaged his attention. He read the scriptures with the greatest solemnity and diligence, and no sooner examined, than he embraced the doctrines of truth; which he adorned by a conversation the most exemplary, and promoted with an eloquence that charmed the ear, whilst it carried conviction to the heart. Through his labours, as well as those of Beza and others, famous in their day, men of renown, the cause daily triumphed in Geneva and through Switzerland; and threatened the downfall of the antichristian power in the South, as it had already fallen in the North. Nor could any thing have prevented a complete revolution, but the united force of regal and papal powers, suppressing, by every atrocity, the spirit of inquiry; and executing, on the more zealous professors, every torment diabolical cruelty could invent. Without this, the reign of popery had then fallen, and not awaited its overthrow to the present day.

Spain, the most ignorant, bigoted, and servile to the Roman see, was penetrated by the light of truth, in spite of all the fires of inquisitors, and their watchfulness to suppress the first approaches of what Rome called heresy. It even passed the mountains, and spread into many parts of Italy, the very seat of THE BEAST.

In Switzerland, it triumphed in many cantons. It entered Hungary, Transylvania, Poland; and every where produced a plentiful harvest, amidst the bitterest persecutions from the ruling powers, and the bloody bishops, whose ecclesiastical courts were crowded with prosecutions, and their prisons filled with confessors. The enemies of truth and godliness pretended not to confine themselves to the bible, or arguments which they found to be impotent; but every where had recourse to torments, racks, and gibbets; the only effectual syllogisms with which they could answer the reformers, and check the course of what they called heresy. The church of Rome tottered from its foundation. Nothing but the strong arm of power, and the interest which the rich and proud had in maintaining its usurpations, propped up the trembling fabric for a while longer; till the appointed time should arrive for its final overthrow. For a space, the deadly wound was healed by the kings of the earth, under the papal hierarchy, giving their power to the beast, and suppressing by the violence of persecution, the rising flame of reformation; but the day we hope is approaching for its fall, never to rise up again.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION,
AND THE UNION OF SENTIMENT AMONG THE
REFORMERS.

It has been often supposed and suggested, that the reformers themselves were at variance on the most important doctrines of the gospel; and, that Luther and Calvin differed greatly in the fundamental articles of their creed: whereas, except in the matter of Christ's presence in the eucharist, all the eminent men among the reformers of that day, concurred in the same fundamental truths:—

1. Of *God's eternal purpose and predestination of an elect people*, and those, comparatively few, ordained to life and glory eternal.

2. That man had lost all ability to do good, and freedom of will to choose it: and was in his nature, as fallen, only inclined to evil.

3. That nothing ever did or can alter this propensity of the human heart, but the Holy Ghost by his own immediate agency upon the souls of men.

4. That a sinner is, and can be justified by faith only; and this not of himself; being unable, either to comprehend, or receive the things that be of the Spirit of God; and therefore, the faith itself must be the gift of God.

5. That merit in creature there is none, nor ever can be. From first to last a sinner must be saved by grace.

6. That the vicarious atonement by the one oblation of Christ upon the cross is effectual, not for the many called, but for the few chosen.

These things are what the reformers uniformly held; as is evident in the conferences at Marburg, between Luther and Zuinglius, Melancthon and Oecolampadius. And nothing in the institutes of Calvin speaks a stronger language, than the answer of Luther to Erasmus, entitled *De Servo Arbitrio*. I shall produce only one paragraph from it, demonstrative of the *one faith*, universally confessed in all the first Protestant churches. It is among our deepest miseries, and the proof of our sad declensions, that we, of latter times, have departed from "the faith once delivered unto the saints;" revived in that day in all its primitive glory: and thanks be to God, after long obscurity, again rising in its brightness in the present generation. May its great Revealer manifest his own almighty influence, and cause the word of truth to run and have free course, and be glorified throughout the world.

Erasmus had attacked Luther on the doctrines of predestination and grace; and according to the present cant of objectors, he urged, "What can be more useless, than to

publish this paradox to the world? namely, That whatever we do, is done, not by *virtus of our own free will*, but in a way of necessity, &c. What a wide gap does the publication of this tenet open among men, for the commission of all ungodliness? What wicked person will reform his life? Who will dare to believe himself a favourite of heaven? Who will fight against his own corrupt inclinations? Therefore, where is either the need, or the utility of spreading these notions from whence so many evils seem to flow?"

To this Luther triumphantly replies, "If, my Erasmus, you consider these paradoxes (as you term them) to be no more than the inventions of men; why are you so extraordinarily heated on the occasion? In that case, your arguments affect not me; for there is no person now living in the world, who's a more avowed enemy to the doctrines of men than myself. But, if you believe the doctrines in debate between us to be (as indeed they are) the doctrines of God; you must have bid adieu to all sense of shame and decency thus to oppose them. I will not ask, whether is the *wisdom of Erasmus* blind? But, which is much more important, where, alas! are your fear and reverence of the Deity, when you roundly declare, that this branch of truth, which he has revealed from heaven, is at best useless, and unnecessary to be known? What! shall the glorious Creator be taught by you his creature, what is fit to be preached, and what to be suppressed? Is the adorable God so very defective in wisdom and prudence, as not to know, till you instruct him, what would be *useful* and what *pernicious*? Or could not *He*, whose understanding is infinite, foresee, previous to his revelation of this doctrine, what would be the consequences of his revealing it, till those consequences were pointed out by you? You cannot, you dare not say this. If then it was the divine pleasure to make known these things in his word; and to bid his messengers publish them abroad, and to leave the consequences of their so doing to the wisdom and providence of him in whose name they speak, and whose message they declare; who art thou, O Erasmus, that thou shouldst reply against God, and say to the Almighty, what dost thou? St. Paul, discoursing of God, declareth peremptorily, *whom he will he hardeneth*: and again, *God willing to show his wrath*, &c. And the apostle did not write this to have it stifled among a few persons, and buried in a corner; but wrote it to the Christians at Rome: which was, in effect, bringing this doctrine upon the stage of the whole world; stamping an universal *imprimatur* upon it; and publishing it to believers at large, throughout the earth. What can sound harsher in the uncircumcised ears of carnal men, than those

words of Christ, *many are called, but few are chosen*? and elsewhere, *I know whom I have chosen*. Now these and similar assertions of Christ and his apostles are the very positions which you, O Erasmus, brand as useless and hurtful. You object, if these things are so, who will amend his life? I answer, without the Holy Ghost no man can amend his life to purpose. Reformation is but varnished hypocrisy, unless it proceed from grace. The elect and truly pious are amended by the Spirit of God: and those of mankind who are not amended by him will perish. You ask, moreover, who will dare to believe himself a favourite of heaven? I answer, it is not in a man's own power to believe himself such, upon just grounds, till he is enabled from above. But the elect shall be so enabled: they shall be enabled to believe themselves to be what indeed they are. As for the rest, who are not endowed with faith, they shall perish; raging and blaspheming, as you do now. But, say you, these doctrines open a door to ungodliness? I answer, whatever door they may open to the impious and profane, yet they open a door of righteousness to the elect and holy, and shew them the way to heaven, and the path of access unto God. Yet you would have us abstain from the mention of these grand doctrines, and leave our people in the dark, as to their election of God. The consequence of which would be, that every man would bolster himself up with a delusive hope of a share in that salvation, which is supposed to lie open to all; and thus genuine humility, and the practical fear of God, would be kicked out of doors. This would be a pretty way indeed of stopping up the gap Erasmus complains of! Instead of closing up the door of licentiousness, as is falsely pretended; it would be in fact opening a gulf into the nethermost hell. Still you urge, where is either the necessity or utility of preaching predestination? God himself teaches it, and commands us to teach it: and that is answer enough. We are not to arraign the Deity, and bring the motives of his will to the test of human scrutiny, but simply to revere both him and it. He, who alone is all-wise and all-just, can in reality (however things appear to us) do wrong to no man; neither can he do any thing unwisely or rashly. And this consideration will suffice to silence all the objections of truly religious persons. However, let us, for arguments sake, go a step farther. I will venture to assign over and above two very important reasons why these doctrines should be publicly taught: 1st, For the humiliation of our pride, and the manifestation of divine grace. God hath assuredly promised his favours to the truly humble. By the *truly humble*, I mean those who are endowed with repentance and despair of saving

themselves: for a man can never be said to be truly penitent and humble, till he is made to know that his salvation is not suspended in any measure whatever, on his own strength, machinations, endeavours, freewill or works; but entirely depends on the free-pleasure, purpose, determination, and efficiency of another, even of God alone. Whilst a man is persuaded that he has it in his own power to contribute any thing, be it ever so little, to his own salvation; he remains in carnal confidence: he is not a self-despairer, and therefore he is not duly humbled before God; so far from it, that he hopes some favourable juncture or opportunity will offer, when he may be able to lend an helping hand to the business of his salvation. On the contrary, whoever is truly convinced that the whole work depends singly and absolutely on the will of God, who alone is the author and finisher of salvation, such a person despairs of self-assistance: he renounces his own will and his own strength: he waits and prays for the operation of God; nor waits and prays in vain. For the elect's sake therefore these doctrines are to be preached: That the chosen of God being humbled by the knowledge of his truths; self-emptied and sunk into nothing as it were in his presence, may be saved in Christ with eternal glory. This then is one inducement to the publication of the doctrine; that the penitent may be made acquainted with the promise of grace, and plead it in prayer to God, and receive it as their own. 2. The nature of the Christian faith requires it. Faith has to do with things not seen. And this is one of the highest degrees of faith, steadfastly to believe that God is infinitely merciful, though he saves (comparatively) but few, and condemns as many; and that he is strictly just, though of his own will he makes such numbers of mankind necessarily liable to damnation. Now, these are some of the unseen things whereof faith is the evidence. Whereas, was it in my power to comprehend them, or clearly to make out *how* God is both infinitely just, and infinitely merciful, notwithstanding the display of wrath, and seeming inequality in his dispensations, respecting the reprobate, faith would have little or nothing to do. But now since these matters cannot be adequately comprehended by us, in the present state of imperfection, there is room for the exercise of faith. The truths, therefore, respecting predestination in all its branches should be taught and published. They, no less than the other mysteries of Christian doctrine, being proper objects of faith, on the part of God's people."

As I have been charmed myself with the plainness and simplicity of this testimony of Luther, I have produced it, as the most con-

convincing proof of the sentiments of this great reformer. I wish it seriously to be considered; and I appeal to every man of common sense, whether any thing can be more explicit, or words less equivocal. Indeed I am ever amazed, that any man of learning, not to say common sense, can, after such plain declarations, dispute what was the opinion of the reformers in the Augsburg Confession, the Helvetic, or the English. That persons may dispute the truths which these contain may be allowed, and welcome. No man is constrained to believe any human articles of faith; but to dispute the meaning of the reformers in these articles is utterly disingenuous, and unbecoming literary men, who have read the history of the times, or the works of the reformers. I will readily admit, that the doctrines of the reformation have very much gone out of vogue, in all the protestant churches as well as our own; but that does not at all alter the case, or give us a liberty to put a meaning upon their articles of faith, the very reverse of what they intended to convey. But, *sic volo narrare fabulam*.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE DIET OF AUGSBURG TO THE RELIGIOUS PEACE IN THE SAME CITY.

IN awful suspense, the contending parties awaited the issue of the diet at Augsburg (1530), but very differently were they affected. A slight sketch of their situation may be amusing as instructive.

Clement, the pope, dreaded a general council, to defeat which all his arts were to be employed. He wished not to compromise the dignity of *his see*, which having set itself above all control, would not stoop to be limited by any superiority, which these assemblies claimed, and of which the councils of Constance and Basil had given him fearful examples; but he had a sensibility peculiarly his own, as he was a bastard, and might therefore justly be impeached and degraded, as an intruder into the vicegerency of Christ, according to the canons.

The emperor wished a general council, the deliberations of which he hoped to control; but he had also a variety of particular views. He wanted the assistance of the protestant as well as catholic electors, to defend the empire, and particularly his hereditary dominions, which were most exposed, against the victorious Ottomans, who had lately besieged his capital of Vienna, and though defeated, he dreaded their return. But he had an object still more at heart, to establish in Germany his power, as despotically, as in his hereditary dominions;

and to subdue both catholics and protestants to himself, which could only be done by deceiving both, and making one instrument of weakening the other.

The catholic princes abhorred the reformation, and zealously attached to the superstitions of Rome, wished to prevent all admission of the Lutheran tenets into their territories, and to reduce the Lutheran princes by force of arms, under the Roman yoke which they had broken.

The protestants, not well united among themselves, saw all their danger, and endeavoured to avert the storm which they perceived gathering around them. They resolved to maintain the steps they had taken; and to advance the work of reformation which they had begun. But they were in Germany as yet, the weaker party; and in great danger of being crushed by the weight of the emperor and the catholic princes. Their interest therefore was evidently to gain time; and by reference of the matters in dispute to a general council, not likely to be held in the present state of the contending parties, to gather strength for the conflicts which threatened them.

With these several views they all assembled at Augsburg; and the emperor opened the diet, when the Augsburg confession was read by Bayer to the emperor and princes, and heard with profound attention. A similar profession of faith was received from the cities of Strasburg, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau, drawn up by Bucer; a noble defence of the protestant doctrines.

The catholics, with the envenomed Eckius at their head, assisted by Faber and Cochleus, produced a refutation of the protestant confession: and the emperor and catholic princes, with the pope's legate, demanded the submission of the protestants to their doughty champion's arguments. But as these carried not the least conviction to their antagonists, they requested a copy of this pretended refutation, that they might answer it. This was denied; their obedience to Rome was peremptorily enjoined; and silence imposed on them for the future. Such proceedings necessarily increased their opposition. They presented to Charles a reply to Eckius and his colleagues, which he objected to receive. The protestants had therefore only to defend themselves by force, or submit to the oppression.

When Charles found them resolute, he hesitated to drive matters to extremities: and an attempt was made by conferences between the opponents, to see if no temperament conciliatory could be found. Melancthon too, conceding, would have gone great lengths to prevent a rupture, but dared not yield the great truths of God; whilst the papists urged their party to insist on terms impossible to be complied with.

These were accordingly rejected. The Hessian and Saxon princes withdrew. The emperor dictated the decree, suppressing the changes which had been made in religion; and commanded all men to return to the papal obedience, at the peril of his imperial wrath: in the execution of which, the catholic princes and their party engaged to support the emperor with all their forces.

The protestant princes now stood upon their defence, and seeing remonstrance in vain, met at Smalkald (1531), and formed a solemn league for the support of their liberties, in which they earnestly invited all those to unite, who had cast off the tyranny of Rome, and wished to preserve their brethren from being compelled to return to the house of their prison. Luther was averse to the way of arms; but the necessity of the case compelled his consent; though the bigotry of his spirit excluded Switzerland and the cities, which had presented their confession of faith by Bucer, from the league.

The electors of the Palatinate and Mentz, dreaded the approaching rupture, which now seemed inevitable in the Germanic body; and endeavoured to reconcile the parties, or at least to suspend the fatal blow. And such was the emperor's situation, that he was compelled to lend a reluctant ear to the proposal of withdrawing his decrees. The Turks threatened Germany, and the protestants refused all assistance, till the edicts of Worms and Augsburg were recalled. Nor would they ratify the succession of his brother Ferdinand to the imperial throne, notwithstanding his majority of votes, but on this condition. Necessity bends the most obstinate politician. Charles, to carry these two points, was obliged to yield, and leave the Lutherans to themselves, till the promised council should assemble to settle the differences in religion (1532).

The great support of the protestant cause, the faithful Saxon, soon after departed, and left his electorate to his son and successor John Frederic, equally zealous with his father, but born for adversity. The peace obtained was highly advantageous to the cause of Lutheranism, which many states now openly avowed, who had been before restrained by apprehensions of the imperial decrees. And Clement, though urged by the emperor, still temporising, contrived to stave off by evasions, the assembling a general council, which he so much dreaded; and died before any place could be fixed upon agreeable to the several parties (1534).

During this interval of suspense, events had happened of the most important kind.

Henry the Eighth, after a long solicitation at Rome for a sentence of divorce from his Queen Catherine, in order to marry Anna Bulleyn, wearied with the tricks of

the legate Campegio, and the duplicity of the pope, to the great joy of the protestants, threw off the papal authority altogether. The pope had solemnly promised the King of France, that if Henry would send his submissions to the holy see, he would sanction the divorce; especially as all the universities had concurred in their suffrage of the unlawfulness of the king's marriage with his brother's widow. But as she was the near relation of the emperor, and her cause warmly espoused by him, the pope, who dreaded the emperor's resentment, and had promised him to support the queen, was in the most unhappy dilemma. Clement cared neither about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the marriage, and had as little thought about religion in the matter, as the king, of conscience, notwithstanding all his pretended scruples. Impatient at the delays, and irritated with the repeated deceptions practised upon him by the legates, sent to protract the affair, Henry threatened to withdraw himself and kingdom totally from the papal jurisdiction. Clement would fain have still temporised, and kept the matter in abeyance: but pushed hard by the imperialists, he pronounced the fatal sentence of the validity of the marriage, with the dire threats of anathemas, if the king was refractory. Two days after, the king's submission, which Clement had required, reached Rome. It had happily arrived too late. The pope dared not retract, for fear of the emperor; and Henry was a man of too violent a temper to be thus insulted. He withdrew himself therefore and his kingdom, wholly from the papal dominion; and to the great joy of his subjects, especially the favourers of reformation, cut off all intercourse with Rome; which his parliament confirmed; and conferred on their monarch the supremacy in church, as well as state. But it must not be imagined that Henry became a protestant, by ceasing to be a papist. No, he was exactly the same unprincipled tyrannical despot as before, and as disposed to persecute protestant as papist, who dared to swerve a hair from his decisions.

A king of a different sort, John, of Leyden, figured upon the theatre in Germany, (1533.) He was a taylor by trade; and setting himself at the head of a fanatic multitude, seized on the city of Munster, where he erected what his deluded followers called the New Jerusalem, over which he presided. But this newly erected throne, established in blood and tumult, was of short duration; and ended in the capture and execution of the monarch and his ministers; and the dispersion of the rabble which followed him. They were of the Anabaptist's sect; at that time remarkable for turbulence, though since subsided into a more peaceable spirit. The emperor, finding his efforts to obtain

a general council, which would be at all satisfactory to the German princes, constantly thwarted by the crafty pontiff, resolved to attempt settling matters himself, in a diet. For this end, he ordered a conference at Worms, between Melancthon and Eckius, for several days; but the disputants appeared as far from each other as ever: and when assembled afterwards, at the diet which met at Ratisbon, no final decision could be concluded. The pope, by his legate, proposed Trent for the place of the assembling the council. The protestant princes objected to the place, as well as to the papal claim of summoning the persons who should constitute that body; which, they complained, must in that case be partial: but, as the emperor and catholic princes consented, the letters of convocation were issued. The protestants refused to submit: and Charles, who had now supposed himself able, determined to compel them. Both sides prepared for battle. Amidst the din of preparations, the great reformer Luther closed his eyes: deploring the miseries, he feared, and exhorting to prayer, patience, and mutual forbearance, as the choicest weapons of our warfare (1546).

He was indeed taken away from the evil to come. The council of Trent assembled. The protestants disclaimed their authority. The emperor prepared to enforce their decrees by arms. The Saxon elector, and the prince of Hesse, boldly prevented him; and penetrating into Bavaria, were ready to force the emperor in his camp at Ingolstadt; when the treacherous Maurice, the nephew of the elector, debauched by the promise of the electorate, and yielding to the cravings of criminal ambition, fell upon Saxony, and compelled John to retire from Bavaria, in order to defend his own dominions. Pursued and surrounded in his retreat; deserted by a considerable part of his army; and compelled to fight at disadvantage; he lost the battle of Muhlberg and his liberty together. And Philip of Hesse, his coadjutor, persuaded by his son-in-law, Maurice, to cast himself upon the emperor's clemency, with promises of favour and preservation of his estates, was detained prisoner, in breach of the most solemn engagement; it is said, by the subterfuge of a German word inserted in the agreement; which would, if true, have only added the greatest meanness to the most perfidious conduct (1547).

The protestant cause now, to human view, appeared desperate. The emperor, with an army, overawed the diet. Maurice, gained by the emperor, with the protestant leaders, consented to submit to the decisions of Trent; what *they* would be, it was impossible to doubt. But equally vain are counsel and might against the Lord. He can take the proud in their own devices, and disap-

point their purposes by the very means planned for their accomplishment.

The plague breaking out at Trent, a few fathers went to Bologna, and the rest dispersed: nor could all the remonstrances of the emperor engage the pope to bring them back again. Vexed to the heart at these tricks of papal management, Charles resolved to mortify the pontiff, by shewing him that he could act without him. He caused therefore a *formulary* to be drawn up, such as he hoped might be accepted by both parties, because the expressions were so ambiguous, as that each might give it their own interpretation; adding some concessions to the protestants, respecting the sacrament in both kinds, and the marriage of the clergy. Hereupon he called a diet, read the decrees which he had ordered to be prepared, and without any suffrage of the princes, enacted this as the rule, till a general council should otherwise direct. Hence this decree received the name of the *INTERIM*, as it was merely designed to be a temporary expedient.

As is often the case (1548), what was intended to satisfy both parties, pleased neither. The *papists* exclaimed against the authority assumed without the pope; the *protestants* complained, that all the essentials of popery were left in full force.

The politic Maurice saw through the designs of Charles, and his intention of erecting his sovereignty, on the humiliation of the princes. He was glad of an opportunity of redeeming his credit with the protestant powers, among whom he still in profession numbered himself; and he was particularly provoked by the imprisonment of his father-in-law, the prince of Hesse, whom he had unintentionally betrayed, and whom Charles refused to release. When, therefore, on the death of Clement, and the succession of Julius, Charles had prevailed on the new pontiff to re-assemble the council at Trent; and with his army compelled the diet, held at Augsburg, to engage themselves implicitly to obey their decrees, Maurice dared to qualify his consent with conditions, judged so derogatory to the papal authority, that the archbishop of Mentz refused to enter them on the register of the diet.

Meantime, the protestants, at the close of the diet, commenced their preparations for whatever might happen. The brave reformers, with Melancthon and Bredius at their head, drew up their confessions of faith to be presented to the council; and Maurice, who merely meant to amuse the emperor by apparent submission, prepared for effectually resisting his ambitious projects. For Charles was no more catholic, than it is to be feared Maurice was protestant; but intended, in the council, which he supposed his present uncontrolled power

could direct, not merely to humble the princes of the empire, and the protestants especially, whom he most feared, but also to set such limits to the papal jurisdiction, as would prevent the pope from interfering with, or interrupting his schemes for securing the same despotic power in Germany and Italy, after which he aspired, as in his own hereditary dominions.

In the midst of his imaginary triumph, and self-confident security, the emperor was surprised at Inspruck, with the sudden approach of a mighty army under Maurice; who had secretly leagued with him many German princes, and the king of France: and rushed upon the unsuspecting monarch. As he had no equal army to oppose, and was himself in danger of being taken prisoner, he was glad to obtain his safety by the PACIFICATION OF PASSAU (1552); containing a solemn grant of perfect liberty to the princes, and the protestant cause. The INTERIM was revoked; all edicts against the Lutherans annulled; the prisoners set at liberty; and all who had suffered for the league of Smalkald, re-instated in their honours and possessions: and a certain number of Lutherans admitted into the council-chamber of Spire, where justice impartial should be henceforth ministered to protestants, as to catholics.

Thus the very man, on whom Charles had depended for the entire subversion of the Lutheran cause, became its firmest bulwark, and established it upon a basis which could no more be overturned.

A diet was to be held to confirm all these concessions. After various delays, it assembled at Augsberg; and there, after long deliberations, the equitable conditions were adjusted, which received the name of THE RELIGIOUS PEACE (1555). The protestants were discharged from all papal jurisdiction. The states and free cities were to be unmolested, in whatever ecclesiastical establishment they chose to form—animosities were to cease—no persecutions to be admitted on account of religious opinions—and, whoever attempted to violate any of these articles, was to be treated as a disturber of the public peace. Oh that men might always be as reasonable, peaceable, and tolerant!

It is a singular event, and supported by strong authority, that this enemy of the protestants, who had repeatedly brought their cause to the very verge of ruin, is supposed to have died in the faith he so long persecuted. Wearied with royalty, and the toils which had worn him down, Charles V. wished to end his days in holy retirement. He resigned his hereditary dominions of Spain and the Netherlands, to his son, Philip, and procured the empire for his brother Ferdinand. He had thoroughly been conversant with the subjects in dispute, and

in the silence of solitude, the absence of tumultuous engagements, and the approach of death, the solemn reflections upon these important truths, which he had so often heard debated, led him to different apprehensions respecting them, from those he had before entertained. His dearest friends, and the companions of his retirement, were seized by the inquisitors, the moment their royal master closed his eyes. His preacher, his confessor, his favoured bishop of Tortosa, with many others of inferior distinction or domestics, expired in flames or torture, the victims of that bloody tribunal, and of the cruel Philip, the unworthy son and successor of this mighty monarch. The vengeance they were prevented from inflicting on the master, fell on his peculiar favourites, and spoke the cause of offence.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROGRESS OF REFORMATION.

THE hope with which Henry the Eighth had inspired the protestants, was greatly disappointed. He had separated from the pope, but not from popery. And though the excellent Cranmer enjoyed his favour, and was supported by him against his many enemies, the cause of truth dared not lift up its head. The iron rod of power held down every bold spirit, which presumed to dispute the king's supremacy, or infallibility, just as the pope's before. It is painful to record the tragedies performed by the malignant Gardiner and Bonner, whose compliance with the king's caprices, still left them power to persecute to death, those who presumed to advance farther in reformation than his pleasure allowed. Even Cranmer often held a precarious existence. Yet the authority of the clergy was greatly reduced; and the translation of the bible, by Tindal, afterwards a noble martyr, contributed to open men's eyes. Having fled his country to escape persecution, he finished and published his work at Antwerp, and thence dispersed the copies in England; which wonderfully spread the light of truth. The number of ministers and people, who, through the writings of the reformers, had embraced the evangelical doctrines, was great: and some of them, as the excellent Bilney, by whom Latimer was converted, with Frith, and other worthies, fell victims to episcopal persecution, and died in flames.

Happily (1546), the death of this inhuman and capricious monarch opened a more pleasing prospect. Edward VI. his son, though very young, had drank deeply into the principles of the reformation, under the tuition of the faithful Cranmer, who, during

his reign, chiefly guided ecclesiastical matters, and filled the sees with men of singular zeal and piety, as Ridley, Latimer, and others. The motley mixture of the former reign now gave place to a more perfect reform; and became nearly such, as the church of England still professes. But the prelates, who had maintained their attachment to Rome under the former sovereign, and conformed with reluctance to the changes since established, waited impatiently for a return of the old religion, as Edward's feeble health declined, and promised a speedy demise. A short reign of felicity to the protestant cause, was succeeded by the accession of the bloody Mary, with her popish advisers. Yet, had the cause of truth so firmly fixed itself in the land, that all the fires kindled in Smithfield, at Oxford, or elsewhere, were unable to consume the seed of the faithful; though they destroyed many great and eminent individuals. Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, were consigned to the flames; but their blood produced a plentiful increase.

(1553.) Mary was a bigot, and dupe to the popish party. She thought to avenge her mother's quarrels, by sacrificing every protestant to her resentments; but the reformation had taken such root as not to be eradicated. Though the chief men in church and state were generally swayed by their interests to embrace the courtly religion, a noble army of martyrs, bishops, priests, and laymen, chose rather to die for Christ, than commit idolatry, and countenance superstition. Happily for the nation, though the mischief done in a short time was abundant, God put a period to Mary's bloody reign, and the crown devolved on Elizabeth, the daughter of the unhappy Boleyn. She inherited a portion of her mother's goodness and protestantism, though mixed with a greater measure of her father's despotism (1558).

Ireland, which had long been as the satellite of the superior planet, and followed her revolutions, had shared in all the struggles and all the blessings of the reformation. Under Edward, and the excellent archbishop of Dublin, Brown, the protestant cause had completely gained the ascendant; though the wildness of the country left the provinces distant from the capital, overrun with popery, as they are to this day. On Mary's accession, the fire of persecution began to kindle; but nearer concerns at home cast the affairs of Ireland into the back ground. At last a zealous Romanist, a Dr. Cole, was dispatched with a full commission, like Paul, the persecutor, going to Damascus, to spread slaughter over the devoted protestants. On his journey, being waited upon by the Mayor of Chester, he could not withhold boasting of the charge committed to him, and producing from his baggage a roll;

"This," said he, "shall lash the heretics of Ireland into obedience." The good woman of the house, where he lodged, heard and trembled; but acute in her wits, as zealous in the cause, she resolved to play the doctor a trick, and as he attended the mayor to the door, and left his boasted roll upon the table, she whipped up, and instead of the commission, she put into its place a pack of cards wrapped like it, with the knave of clubs facing the back. The doctor, as soon as the packet was ready for sailing, passed into Ireland; and in all the pomp of an inquisitor, appeared before the lord lieutenant and privy council at the castle, ready to enter on his office. The secretary being called upon to open and read his commission, he was as much surprised as the doctor was confounded, to find nothing but a pack of cards, and the knave of clubs facing him. The ridicule of the scene may be easily imagined. The lord lieutenant and privy council could not authorise any proceedings without a new commission; and desiring the doctor to return to England, and hasten back, he jocularly said, that in the interim he would shuffle the cards. But before the business was dispatched, the queen departed to give an account of herself to God, and the doctor was left with the knave of clubs.

Scotland could not fail imbibing the spreading contagion. The Scotch, always warlike, and men of acute minds, had many of them returned from the foreign countries, where the reformation had been introduced, and brought to their native land the books and tenets of the reformers. Long had the truth struggled against the power and craft of popish tyranny; and many a martyr, and many a confessor consented to go to prison and to death, rather than abjure the faith once delivered unto the saints. No monarch had yet attempted to break the yoke, and the priesthood was triumphant, till the intrepid Knox arose (1559), rude as the bleak climate which gave him birth. Having formed with Calvin, at Geneva, the strictest friendship, and adopted all his opinions respecting church government, he returned to his native land; and with his rough eloquence, and hardihood that knew no fear, he bore down all opposition, overturned the whole popish hierarchy, and established the presbyterian government in its stead, to which the church of Scotland still adheres.

The Belgic provinces being nearer the scene of action, early received the light of gospel reformation; and none suffered more severely for their adherence to the faith, than that afflicted country. The obstinate bigot, Philip, resolved to extirpate all who refused subjection to Rome. The bloody inquisition was set up in the provinces; and the more cruel duke of Alva, his general, poured out the protestant blood as water on

every side. Reyolt against this oppressive dominion, rent the provinces in twain. A part defied their enemies; and, in a war, of which we have few examples, maintained their liberties, and triumphed at last over their persecutors. The Dutch republic, under the famous William of Orange, stood as high in majesty against the humbled Spaniard, as they were distinguished for the purity of their religious faith and practice. *Hec quantum mutatus ab illo!* The present change is as degrading to the country, as afflictive to the mind of every true protestant. May a phoenix rise from the ashes, and her youth be renewed as the eagle's.

Spain, and the Spanish dominions in Italy, had received the beam of reformation. The very doctors brought by Charles the Fifth to combat Luther, caught the fire from his lips, and carried back to their country the heresy they came to subdue. But their the bigotted monarchs, and superstitious clergy, fiercely set all their engines at work to suppress the hated innovations; and, after torrents of bloodshed, by martyrs innumerable; tortures, racks, and gibbets prevailed to extinguish the flame. The light of truth was clean put out, and obscure darkness has there reigned ever since, with debasing superstition, beyond that of any other country. I include Portugal, where the same steps, under the same monarch, produced the same miserable effects, to the utter subversion of all gospel grace and truth.

The Spanish dominions in Italy shared nearly the same fate; and though Naples would not admit the inquisition, the persecution of the reformers was equally inveterate. The brave Ochino, and the excellent Peter Martyr, exerted their zeal and eloquence: not quite in vain, but without being able to effect a national change. Compelled to fly for their lives, they took refuge in foreign lands, and watered the garden of strangers with the dew of that heavenly wisdom, which their deluded countrymen prevented from dropping on themselves.

Through all regions under papal jurisdiction, every effort of craft and cruelty was employed; and from the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, the name of protestant exterminated.

Thus stood the account, at last, between protestants and papists in Europe. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Brandenburg, Prussia, England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, all protestant governments. Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Belgic provinces under the Spanish yoke, all papal. Germany, with its vast dependencies divided, and nearly poised in interest between both, every state having a mixture of its opponents; in some tolerated, in others persecuted. Switzerland divided, but the preponderating weight, and greater numbers, protestant; and France,

more than once on the equilibrium, ready to change its dominant religion; and at last returning to the house of bondage, though with millions of its inhabitants firm in the protestant faith.

The numbers were still on the side of the catholics, and their union under one visible head, greatly in their favour, politically speaking; whilst the protestants quickly separated into two great bodies, besides other subdivisions, at the heads of which were Luther and Melancthon on the one hand of the *Augsburg Confession*, and on the other, of the *Helvetic Confession*, were Oecolampadius and Calvin. These also were pretty nearly balanced. In the north Lutheranism generally prevailed. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the far larger part of the German empire, followed the Augsburg confession; whilst the British islands, Holland, Switzerland, Geneva, France, and many estates of Germany, adopted the confession of faith, which hath since obtained the name of the Reformed, or Calvinistic.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE LEARNING AND HERESIES OF THE TIMES.

THE general conflict, which now agitated the christian world, contributed exceedingly to sharpen the ingenuity of the combatants; and to excite the greatest zeal of inquiry into every branch of knowledge. And, as such seasons peculiarly rouse and bring forth the latent sparks of genius, which would otherwise lie dormant and unnoticed, never was there a more vivid light of learning displayed, and a greater number of men of the first abilities produced on the theatre of the world. Every where seminaries, and universities, were endowed, erected, enlarged, and the numbers of students immense. The mode of tuition also in all protestant countries became amazingly improved; and all the sciences, as well as theology, placed on a different footing. Aristotle, though still prevalent in the schools, was controlled from exercising his former despotic rule, by the good sense, the enlarged views, and the sound divinity of the times. The ingenious Ramus, in France, introduced a different method of reasoning, which exasperated the old partisans of the Stagyrte: and Paracelsus began to open the road to the higher progress of experimental philosophy, by his researches into the first elements of bodies, by fire, and solution: though still tinctured with the follies of magic and alchemy, yet his chemistry led the way to all the noble improvements which have since been made.

The immense impressions of ancient clas-

sical writings, through the indefatigable labour of editors, and the happy invention of printing, spread a general diffusion of knowledge and love of the *belles lettres* through all the nations; especially those who were reformed; where science of every sort was peculiarly cultivated: and, above all, scriptural knowledge was pursued with singular avidity. Not only was the Bible now in every hand, in their native tongue; but the comments and expositions, critical and practical, of the reformers, excite the approbation, and continue to promote the edification of the present day, however highly advanced in all the attainments of criticism and literature. I will only mention the comment of Luther on the epistle to the Galatians, as an enduring monument of sound divinity, and biblical erudition: and the institutes of Calvin, equally admirable for their argument as their latinity. But the freedom of inquiry now introduced, in minds untaught of God, and rising on the stilts of vain imagination to a wisdom above what is written, was naturally productive of very fearful consequences. Science when, under the controul of faith, and bowing before revelation, it presumes not to intrude into the things it hath not seen, is a blessing to the church, and highly contributive to every thing which is excellent and of good report. But where men, vainly puffed up of their fleshly mind, suppose *that* wisdom of man which is foolishness with God, and *that* intellect, which is darkened through corruption, capable of deciding respecting truths above our comprehension, though implying no contradiction to the truest reason, then error and blasphemy come in like a flood. Revelation stands at their bar as a culprit, because, challenging implicit submission, which they are indisposed to pay; and every thing mysterious must pass through the ordeal of their philosophy, and be rejected or admitted, only as it accords with, or differs from, their supposed infallible reason. Hence arose a numerous host of anti-christian doctors, who are still increasing; and threatening us with as fearful a deluge of false philosophy, to overwhelm the christian name, as before it had been menaced by superstition and popery. Helvetius, Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume, Gibbon, and all the infidel tribe of this day, are but the spawn of Pomponatius, Bodin, Rabelais, Montaigne, Bembo, Bruno, Taulerius, and a multitude of others, who then treated all religion with contempt and ridicule, and insinuated, that christianity deserved no more respect than paganism or mahomedanism; and was but a cunning fable invented by priests to enslave the minds of the credulous. These acute geniuses, indeed, did not always agree in the extent of their discoveries: some were disposed, as the followers of Socinus, to allow the christian Sa-

viour a name among the sages deserving honour; others ridiculed the impostor, and turned his miracles into contempt: yet they professed veneration for a Supreme Being, and supposed there might be a God; whilst the more advanced in science, doubted his very being or existence, and proceeded to the summit of human wisdom, to know exactly (what the fool or wicked man wishes, and saith in his heart) that "there is no God." France, eminent in that day as in our own, singularly took the lead in this happy discovery, hid from ages and generations: yet, for a long while bending the neck under the yoke of authority, she dared not, till of late, assert the reign of liberty and atheism.

But let it be remembered, that learning is no more to be blamed for its abuse, than the sun for the venomous and poisonous reptiles hatched by his fervid beams. The revealed truths of God, so far from shunning investigation, call for the most accurate inquiry into their nature and evidence, and approve themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, whom sin hath not enslaved, and taught to reject what he *dares not believe*; and where science, falsely so called, hath not prejudiced the mind against evidence, abundantly more conclusive than any upon which the infidel builds his own system of religion, or no religion. The rationalists are mistaken if they think wisdom shall die with them. The simplicity which is in Christ will carry conviction of the truth to the heart, in defiance of all its open or insidious enemies, and more dangerous, though pretended philosophic friends. It stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God: and as many as are ordained unto eternal life, believe to the saving of their souls. With regard to all the rest, their evil heart of unbelief is departed from the living God, and "How then," saith Christ, "can ye believe?"

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE ACCESSIONS TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

In Europe scarcely any people now remained, who had not assumed the outward profession of christianity. Even in Finland and Lapland, thinly scattered amidst their mossy mountains, and everlasting snow, the inhabitants received from some zealous Swedish missionaries the gospel light. It is feared that some few continue in heathenism unto this day, or with such a tinge of christianity only, as scarcely forms a shade of difference. In these inhospitable regions, magic and witchcraft have taken their last refuge.

But a vast field opened for the diffusion of the word of truth, in the discoveries made in both the Indies. The Spaniards and Portuguese, eager to extend the pale of popery as well as their own dominion, not only spread these by fire, sword, and inquisition, but enlisted under their missionary banners regiments of friars, black and white, Franciscans, and Dominicans; and above all the rest, the newly instituted and more specious company of Jesuits (1550), who penetrated into the depths of America, Africa and Asia; and endeavoured to erect the banner of the cross in China and Japan. Nor were their labours without the appearance of vast success, however the religion which they taught was far removed from the truth as it is in Jesus. To me indeed, and those who think as I do, it will be a matter of doubt, whether the disciples of a Xavier, or the converts of Loyola and Dominic, with their partisans of the Romish superstition, should be admitted among the number of christians; or their labours be thought to have contributed to the promotion and furtherance, or the disgrace and hindrance of the true religion of Christ. Certain it is, that the methods these men pursued tended much more to make disciples to themselves and the pontiffs of Rome, than to form the mind to the reception of evangelical truth, or the heart to the love and service of a reconciled God. And the zeal of these apostles, fiercely as it burned to make converts to their opinions, burned more fiercely in inquisitorial flames, against all who wished to worship God in the way they called heresy, and opposed their falsehood and perversion of the doctrines of the gospel, as well as condemned their idolatry and superstitious practices, as subversive of its most fundamental principles.

A feeble effort was made from Geneva, to send missionaries to America, among the poor untutored Indians: though no success appears to have followed the attempt. The settlements of the English in North America, at the latter end of the century, laid a foundation for a happier issue; and opened that great door and effectual for the preaching the gospel which hath since been attended with such abundant success. Yet it must not be concealed, and ought for ever to be lamented, that settlements made with commercial views, however ultimately the means of introducing the true religion, have usually commenced with acts of oppression highly indefensible; and with the erection of a dominion in lands to which the invaders had no just title. God can indeed bring good out of human evil, but the evil is not the less, because of the providential benefits ultimately resulting from the commerce or conquests of wicked men.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

WHEN the reformation became established, the different nations professing the Christian name divided: three great bodies, each claiming to be the *true church*, and in general *exclusively* so, composed the Christian world. The most ancient, the *Greek Church*; the more modern, the *Latin or Western Church*; and the late vast rent made from it, now distinguished by the *Protestant Church*. As my object in this account, is the *Spiritual Church* of Christ, and not the formal and nominal one, which under pomp, ceremonies, and superstition had smothered all vital godliness, my chief attention will be confined to the latter. Nor therein shall I presume to find a general body of real christians, far from it. The faithful were ever few. The protestants themselves, as a body, were only in *name*, what their confessions of faith should have led them to be in *reality*; and therefore among *them*, as ever before, the spiritual church must be followed by the traces of the cross under which it groaned, and the reproach of Christ, which ever rested upon the disciples of the Son of God; as it must for ever do on those, who holding up the word of light, in its purity, and adorning it by a conversation becoming godliness, upbraid their fellows for their hypocrisy, and dereliction of the principles which they have professed; bearing witness to their deeds, that they are wrought in darkness: and thus as sharply condemning unfaithful protestants, and apostates from the gospel, as the idolatries of popery, and the debasements of superstition.

SECTION I.

THE GREEK CHURCH.

THIS eldest branch of christianity still subsists, though reduced by the Mahomedan power to the lowest distress; and deprived of all its former splendour. Every attempt to form a union with, or rather to obtain a submission to the Roman pontiffs, constantly failed; and ended usually in mutual anathemas. After the taking of Constantinople, the glory of her patriarch faded greatly, and his dominion was equally reduced; though he still exercised some authority over the other three great patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Russia, the present chief member of his communion, has long withdrawn herself from his obedience, and is governed by her own patriarch, who acknowledges no dependence on Constantinople. His nominal dominion, however, is

still wide, extending over all the East, Greece, the isles of the Archipelago, Wallachia, Moldavia, and reaching into Poland. But the very abased state of the Greeks, their ignorance, superstition, and total abandonment of all that can be reckoned worthy the name of christian, renders their history little interesting, where the object is the inquiry into the living church.

The divisions, that have been mentioned before, still subsisted in the eastern church. The Nestorians, and Monophysite christians had their independent patriarchs; not under the Constantinopolitan jurisdiction, and if any real religion subsisted it was probably to be found among the Nestorians, who were said to be neither so superstitious, nor so much loaded with rites and ceremonies, as their brethren. The Jacobites, Copts, Armenians, Abyssinians, and a variety of inferior sects, were branches of one or other of these greater sectaries. They had their own convents, bishops, and pastors, equally jealous of their independence, and I fear in general far from every thing which could deserve the name of real godliness. The Romish missionaries have exerted their endeavours to bring over all these various sectaries to the church of Rome; and have, by influence and money, prevailed on some congregations to make profession of obedience to the Roman pontiff: on which new bishops and patriarchs have been pompously created to fill these Romish sees, under an idea of his recovered dominion. But in general it hath been an imposition; and the converts to Romanism only held in subjection whilst the cause operated, of poverty receiving support.

As impotent have been the efforts of Rome to obtain dominion over the rising nation of the Russians: all attempts in the issue proved abortive; and have for a long while been abandoned.

Whatever dignity or prerogatives are still preserved to the patriarch of Constantinople, he is obliged to purchase them dearly of the Turkish vizier. And though an election to that high office is made by the adjacent bishops, yet through the ambition of supremacy, tempting these base ecclesiastics on one hand, and the avarice of the Turkish rulers on the other, the changes are frequent, and the see goes to the best bidder, who is sometimes hardly enthroned, before he loses his honours and purchase-money, to be displaced by some other bishop, who can bribe higher.

The state of contempt, oppression, and ignorance into which they are sunk under the Mahomedan government is deplorable; and the corruption of manners among their priests and people awfully universal: tenacious only of their miserable forms and ceremonies, in which all their christianity con-

sists, and strangers alike to the gospel doctrines, and the purity of godliness. The latest accounts of the Abyssinian church, by Bruce, hardly manifest a ray of true christianity remaining. And Russia, even now, has scarcely emerged from the common sink of ignorance, intemperance, and superstition.

The Lutherans at first attempted to form a union with the patriarch of Constantinople, and the wise and gentle Melancthon, sent their confession of faith to him. But alas! the pride of Greece was just as great as the pride of Rome; and coalition with the superstitions of the one as impracticable as with the other. Since then I believe they have been left without farther application, to the enjoyment of their own saints, relics, dignity, poverty, pride, and ignorance.

SECTION II.

THE CHURCH OF ROME.

THE right arm of popish power and dominion was cut off by the reformation. Every attempt to regain their lost authority has proved abortive. Thousands upon thousands have fallen by the sword of war, and the inquisitors; but the fatal blow was struck, and though every effort hath been made to heal the deadly wound, it was incurable; and Rome now seems hastening fast to final destruction.

Yet the pontifical see remained eminent in power, wealth and dignity; and lorded it, though not with such despotic power as before, over the nations under its obedience. A new model was formed for the political management of its interests; and though none of its pretensions were abated, a general council was still supposed by many to be paramount over all the christians in the Roman pale. However, the infallibility of the holy see became better secured by a previous consultation with the principal cardinals, in matters of religious controversy; which prudence now made necessary, before any bull issued. A variety of separate congregations were established, for different branches of business, among which one for *relics* is not forgotten; that all matters might be transacted with the profoundest policy, and occasions prevented for protestant accusations. And in these congregations many things were carried, and adopted in opposition to the opinion of the infallible head.

The monarchs of Europe gained greatly by the reformation. The fulminations of the pontifical see lost all the momentum, that had before made the strongest colossus to tremble. It was seen in the case of the English king, how dangerous it was to provoke those who could so easily avenge them-

selves. And therefore the pontiffs cautiously contented with assuming the same power, made a virtue of their clemency in not exerting it. As they could proceed no longer in the way of open war, it became more needful to provide secret, but mighty agents to prop up the pillars of their tottering throne. The mendicant tribes had rather fallen into disgrace, and some of their branches had given much vexation to the holy see, as the *Fraticelli*. Auxiliaries were wanted, who should unite learning, zeal, and genius, with the most devoted submission to Rome and her pontiffs; whose abilities might introduce them into the cabinets of monarchs as confessors; whose science might dispel ignorance from the schools; and whose unlimited obedience might render them proper tools, to spread as missionaries, the Roman supremacy, through the old world and the new: exactly such were found in the order of *Jesuits*. The fanatic, but intrepid Loyola was their founder (1550); and the Roman see adopted them with cordial affection, as its devoted satellites; imposing on them, among other common vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, an additional engagement, "to hasten without hesitation to any part of the earth, and for any purpose, which the pontiff should enjoin them." For this end, a choice selection was made, of the most ingenious, the most learned, the most adroit, and the best skilled in mechanic arts, as well as mathematics, painting, and philosophy. Their zeal and activity roused the slumbering Franciscans and Dominicans to jealousy. They buckled on their armour afresh, and sharpened their weapons to contest the palm of victory with their brethren of the new fraternity; and in nothing yield to them in devotion, and loyalty to the holy see.

The accommodating manners of this new order; their profound dissimulation; their artful insinuation into the courts of princes, and the secrets of men; their penetration in the discovery of the best means of effecting their purposes; and their easiness in relaxing the severity of penance and morals, according to the rank of the penitent; soon procured them universal preference. All the malice and envy of their brethren, though exerted to bring them into suspicion, and to diminish their influence, was abortive. The favour of Rome, but much more their own policy and cunning, preserved and increased the credit of the order, and raised it to the summit of eminence, above all their fellows; an eminence they long maintained: and by their activity and artifice supported and enlarged the bounds of the papal jurisdiction.

Yet in the vigour of youth, and the zenith of their prosperity, the good archbishop of Dublin, Brown, ventured to pronounce their

doom with a precision approaching prophecy. After speaking in his sermon of the wondrous progress the Jesuits were making in the world, and which their very constitution was formed to produce, he adds, but, "God shall suddenly cut off this society, even by the hand of those who have most succoured them, and made use of them, so that at the end they shall become odious to all nations. They shall have no resting place upon earth, and a Jew shall have more favour than a Jesuit." The appointed time came. The Roman power itself is humbled to the dust, and to this nothing has more contributed than the destruction of this very order by the papal see itself (1773).

A variety of other orders arose, whose names I shall only mention, without their particularities, the *Theatines*, *Barnabites*, *Fathers of Somasquo*, *Priests of the Oratory*, &c. all professing to revive the ancient sanctity of manners, and to exhibit a purer model than the debased state of the monastic orders, and the clergy in general afforded. This decline was a favourite topic of the reformers. Indeed their rebukes, I may call them invectives, roused the whole sacerdotal tribe to a greater decency of conduct. The inferior clergy at least, put on a face of gravity, and external sobriety and seriousness; and the different orders entered upon various reforms; a proof how much they were needed. Hence arose the new branch of Franciscans, who adopted the rigorous rules of St. Francis, and bear the name of *Capuchins*, from the additional cowl added to their habit; which innovation offended highly many of their brethren; but was confirmed by the pope, and continues the badge of their order.

So far indeed the church of Rome itself highly profited by the reformation. The honour of their vocation, and the desire to remove the reproaches of the Lutherans, produced much more beneficial effects than all the canons of the council of Trent. Nor less did the same cause operate, in stimulating them to excel in literature; wherein the Jesuits set an admirable example. Indefatigable in pursuit of knowledge themselves, they became the preceptors to others, in all polite literature as well as theological learning. Still adhering however to Aristotelian subtleties in dispute, in order to puzzle adversaries, whom they could not confute. Hence the Romish church furnished a host of men, high in reputation for attainments in science of every kind. And thus they were as much indebted to the reformation, for the revival of literature, as for the amendment of their morals.

Yet this amendment rather reached the inferior than the superior clergy. The popes themselves, though more decent in general than before, continued many of them to dishonour the high station in which they

were placed, and shewed themselves as much beyond shame as above controul. In the beginning of the century, Pius the Third, had, besides other acts of atrocity charged upon him, raised his two bastard sons, in their infancy, to be cardinals. And his successor, Julius the Third, was no sooner seated on the throne of St. Peter, than he placed the red hat on the head of the boy, who was the keeper of his monkeys, and the object of his infamous passion.

The greater bishops, whose immense revenues afforded them all the magnificence of earthly grandeur, displayed few of the features of the lowly Nazarene. Many of them princes of the empire, exhibited all the pomp of majesty, as well as the luxury. And the courts of monarchs attached the prelates in general, more than their dioceses; to which they regarded it as a kind of banishment, to be confined. Yet upon the whole, throughout the papal pale, there was a considerable change for the better in the manners of the clergy; and they became in general less profligate, and their minds better informed.

The council of Trent had assembled (1549) to ascertain the *doctrines*, restore the *discipline*, and correct the *manners* of the church; to all which it applied but ineffectual and miserable remedies. Though the papal power swayed all the deliberations, and the legates dictated the decrees, still the popes arrogated to themselves the sole right of *interpreting them*. And for that purpose, an especial *congregation* at Rome was appointed. So that after all the pretences of the council's deliberation and decision, it remained with the pontiff to enforce what he approved, and to interpret the rest according to his own pleasure and interest. Thus after the farce of many years assembling and debating, all depended still upon the great interpreter. It was impossible therefore, that any other result should spring from all this wondrous body of collected wisdom, than just what we see, the maintenance of the despotic power of the Roman prelate, and the confirmation of all past abuses, with the addition of many more.

I shall not enter into the decrees of this council, which would carry me too far, and shall only observe that its decisions were admitted only partially in some states, and with modifications and salvoes in others. Nor did its determinations put an end to the disputes of catholics among themselves, any more than prove in the least satisfactory or convincing to the protestants. Their boasted *unity of doctrine* was very weak indeed: and the reproach cast on the protestants, and their differences of opinion, and which indeed they deserved for their religious disputes, was as applicable to the papists themselves. Franciscans against Dominicans,

and Thomists against Scotists, maintained unceasing battle. The bishops contended for their divine right and jurisdiction against the pope, who denied them both, but as a favour of the holy see. The Gallican church maintained her liberties against papal encroachments; and all on this side the mountains exalted the supremacy of general councils above the Roman see. The Jesuits drew upon themselves the keenest invectives of the Benedictines and others, for their impudent encroachments, and suspicious morality. Matters of the greatest moment continued to be disputed, nor could all the efforts of the pontiffs compel or induce the angry combatants to silence. The power and jurisdiction of the see of Rome—the subjects of the catholic church—the nature, necessity, and efficacy of grace—the principles of morals—the operation of the sacraments—the best mode of christian instruction—These, and many other points, were disputed with abundant acrimony.

The council of Trent made no alteration in rites and ceremonies. Many indeed desired a reformation in the grosser abuses; but this was touching priestcraft in a tender part. The papal legates and their party therefore warded off the blow. Idolatry, images, relics, frauds, maintained their ground. Indeed where the protestants are still numerous, or their proximity makes more circumspection needful, the more offensive acts of idolatry, and the grosser frauds are avoided. But in the more enslaved countries of Romanism, in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and their colonies, there superstition still reigns triumphant, and fraud and folly appear without a blush. The blood of St. Januarius regularly liquefies and the milk of the virgin is as fresh as if had been just drawn from her breasts in Palestine.

The Bible was one of the forbidden books which the people might not consult without permission. And no man must comment on the scriptures, even in private, in any way different from the language of the church: nor print without a license. So truly is the key of knowledge reserved by the popes in their own custody. And wherever their imperious decrees are obeyed, the holy scriptures are a book sealed, and all divine knowledge confined to the miserable mass and breviary, and such wretched discourses as serve to fix the ignorance of divine things more inveterate, by inspiring confidence in their own deceived and deceiving spiritual guides.

It was ridiculous enough, that in this wise assembly, the *Vulgate*, the ancient Latin translation of the Bible then in use, though full of the grossest mistakes and deviations from the original, was consecrated for ever as the only *authentic and perfect* translation;

and withal it was determined, that this version should be accurately revised and corrected; and a new edition published by authority; and this too was never done: so that the people were left in the strangest situation imaginable, and the teachers themselves in circumstances the most embarrassing: compelled to use as a consecrated translation, from which they may not depart, a version, confessedly in need of correction; and promised a new edition still more perfect, which was never taken in hand.

The state of pure religion, in a church so corrupt, even in the fountain-head itself, may easily be conceived: where all godliness consisted in implicit obedience to the holy see, and exact attention to the formularies of devotion, the performance of penance, and the purchase of indulgences. Yet we must not suppose, that the whole body was utterly destitute of the life of christianity. Amidst all the prevailings of iniquity, and the servitude of superstition, the writings of some of those who were called mystical divines, shew, that they cultivated still the religion of the heart; and however debased by prejudice and error, supposed the life of godliness to consist in a state of conscious favour and communion with God; producing real purity of mind, and holiness of conversation. But it must be confessed, these were few and hidden: in silence and retirement, they avoided observation, and therefore escaped the charge of heresy, which would have certainly fastened upon them, if they had not been content to keep their religion to themselves. Jesuitical religion, iniquitorial religion, the established religion of popery, will allow us to look to such a religion with abhorrence only, and no hope.

We turn therefore to a more pleasing scene, the church reformed from the abominations of popery; not but that we shall find therein much to lament, and much to condemn. Yet, there the living body subsisted of pure religion, and undefiled; therein we shall discover genuine christianity; and though small, a seed that shall be to the Lord for a generation, the remnant according to the election of grace.

SECTION III.

ON THE CHURCH REFORMED FROM THE ERRORS OF POPERY.

I AM entering on a subject, in which it is difficult to maintain that absolute impartiality which is so desirable; and not to be warped into misrepresentation by educational prejudices. To have a decided opinion in a matter so momentous, as regards the salvation of men's souls, is our duty, and highly approveable: but, though a protestant, I will

pledge myself intentionally not to deceive; and will speak the truth as far as I know it, whether respecting protestant or papist, or the different denominations among ourselves, without hiding the blemishes of my own. I can truly aver, I seek simply truth, as it is revealed in the Bible: and I mean to embrace it in a profession open and undisguised, of whatever I find in the scripture, respecting the doctrine or discipline of the true church: and wherever I am mistaken in my representations, my ears are open to conviction, and my pen ready to correct unintentional errors.

The body of protestants who separated from the Romish communion, may be comprised under three grand divisions. In each of these a variety of shades of difference in doctrine and discipline will be found. The *Lutheran*—the *Catholic*—and the *Heterodox*—or such as departed from their brethren in those articles of faith, which both the others had laid down as fundamental, and essential to salvation.

I. The Lutheran Church.

The great reformer, Luther, left his name, as the mark of union in that church, which was in a peculiar manner indebted to his labours. We have seen its rise, through the intrepid opposition of an Augustine monk, to the papal abuses: the exclusion of those who adhered to him from the Roman pale, by the excommunication of Leo X.; the vigorous struggle, till the confession of *Augsburg*; when it began to grow into its present form; its final emancipation from all pontifical authority; and its legal independence established by the pacification of *Passau*; and, lastly, by the peace of *Augsburg*.

The leading principle of the reformation is, that THE BIBLE ALONE CONTAINS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS, which every man is to read and consider; and thence alone to draw all the articles of his faith and practice: and nothing is binding upon the conscience, but what is there clearly revealed, or necessarily deducible from the scripture declarations. These are generally admitted principles; but the protestant churches have severally differed in the application of some of them, and manifested a most blameable bigotry and severity towards their brethren, in enforcing their own interpretations of the scripture; and, that oftentimes, according to their own acknowledgments, in matters not essential to salvation.

To maintain nearer union of sentiment and worship among themselves, each church has adopted particular confessions and formularies, which have been laid down as necessary to communion with that body: and thus hath often contracted grievously the circle of exclusion respecting their brethren,

who hold with them one head Christ, and one faith in all essential articles.

The Lutheran doctrine is avowed to be comprised in the *Augsburg Confession*; and in Melancthon's *Apology* for it, in reply to the popish objections; these are regarded as of first authority: though it must be confessed, some of the opinions respecting the real presence in the eucharist, are far more objectionable, in the apology than in the confession. *The articles of Smalcald*, drawn up by Luther, with a view to heal, if possible, the disputes raised, have softened down some of the harsher expressions of the Augsburg confession; and with the *catechisms* of the great master, are received in that church as directorial. Whilst the *form of concord* asserting the *ubiquity* of Christ's human body, and the *real presence* in the sacrament, with the brand of heresy, and the sentence of excommunication fixed upon all who did not receive these dogmas, though it was strongly maintained and supported by the more rigid Saxon divines of the Lutheran persuasion, was as warmly disputed, and rejected, by the more moderate.

The leading doctrines of the Augsburg confession are, the *true and essential divinity of the Son of God*;

His substitution and vicarious sacrifice; and *The necessity, freedom, and efficacy, of divine grace* upon the human heart.

Where God, the Son, is thus known, as a real Saviour to the uttermost; and God the Spirit acknowledged in the experience of his influence on the conscience, why should any thing afterwards be permitted to break the bands of union between those who have been admitted to *friendship with God*?

Respecting the government of the church and its forms, it is admitted universally among the Lutherans, that the supreme ruler of the state, is the head of all authority, in what relates to causes ecclesiastical as well as civil; and, that the church is subject to the powers that are established: though no power has authority to alter the revealed word of God, or to impose upon the conscience arbitrarily its own dictates—consent, not constraint, must form christian union. The forms therefore of religion to be observed, though generally such as had been before in the church, were purged from superstition and error; and these forms not so uniformly prescribed, but that some have retained rites, which others have rejected without a breach of unity of spirit; as they agree that indifferent things shall be left indifferent.

This is singularly evident in the mode of ecclesiastical government established in the Lutheran church. In Sweden it continues to be episcopal. In Norway the same. In Denmark, under the name of *superintendent*,

all episcopal authority is retained. Whilst, through Germany, the superior power is vested in a *consistory*, over which there is a president, with a distinction of rank and privileges, and a subordination of inferior clergy to their superiors, different from the parity of presbyterianism.

Though the same liturgical form is not everywhere observed, the leading features of worship are alike. The public service on the Lord's day is universal; and occasional worship at other times. The holy scriptures are everywhere read in the mother tongue—Prayer, without a liturgy, though after a directory, is offered to God in Christ—with praise in psalms and hymns—Sermons are regularly preached for general instruction—Catechising used for the rising generation—The Lord's supper is celebrated frequently, by all, who, after examination of the minister, are judged intelligent and admissible. The great transactions of our Lord are commemorated at the usual seasons; and some Lutheran churches observe festivals, which others have not admitted.

The article of church censures, so much abused, and so much neglected, was by the Lutheran regulation lodged with the clergy and courts of their superintendence; and in consequence of abuses on the one hand of this spiritual power, and contempt on the other of its censures, this branch of discipline is in a very degraded state: and the more corruption multiplies in manners, the less ability is there to restrain them. Indeed, in the Lutheran, as in the Anglican church, the personal influence of a good example, and the zealous discharge of the ministerial office, will do more to awe offenders and revive discipline, than any sentences pronounced in spiritual courts. Perhaps the feeling complaints so often uttered of the want of all discipline, would be most effectually removed, if those who made them, set themselves more zealously and faithfully to warn the unruly, to instruct the ignorant, to restore the fallen; and in preaching and living, to set forth the true apostolic doctrine and practice. Their rebukes would make the proudest tremble; and the uniformity of their conversation give authority to their exhortations.

The Lutheran church had, by the peace of Augsburg, gained a first establishment; but the very contract which had secured its liberty, checked its progress; as no prelate, dignitary, or other ecclesiastic, could come over to this faith and worship, without the forfeiture of all his ecclesiastical preferment. To this the archbishop of Cologne was obliged to submit; preferring a wife and Lutheranism to his archbishopric, which he was compelled to resign. However, the steadfast abettors of this faith, zealous for the truths they held, disappointed all the

open and secret attacks of their adversaries, to bring them back to the house of their prison, and firmly stood their ground; producing a noble army of defendants, men of the highest eminence for literature, as well as zeal and devotedness to Christ. Among them, Melancthon, Carlostadt, Camerarius, Flaccus, and Chemnitz, deservedly hold the first places. By these, learning in all its branches was promoted and cultivated. The miserable scholastic theology was greatly exploded by Luther and his noble associates, from a conviction of its barren and unfruitful nature, and a more rational mode of investigation of the divine truths introduced, where the Bible, not Aristotle, prevailed. Yet they despised not the fair deductions of syllogistic reasoning, whilst they wished to banish the jargon of terms, and the subtleties of sophisms, which tended merely to puzzle, instead of elucidating the subject.

The *Theosophists*, disciples of Paracelsus, addicted to chymistry, and the solution of bodies into their first principles, with the most diligent experiments, joined enthusiastic ideas of inward illumination, as the means of arriving at discoveries, above the native reach of human faculties. Hoffman, and the famous Behman, were the leaders of this school. An air of singular piety and mystic devotion engaged a number of disciples; and names, highly respectable, are mentioned as favourers of them, such as Arndt and Wegelius.

As theological science was peculiarly pursued, many eminent expositors of scripture appeared; none more revered than the great Reformer himself, from whose sentiments it is to be justly lamented that his disciples have so greatly departed: and whilst they honour him with such singular devotion, dispute the most explicit and characteristic doctrines of his theology; of which I have given a specimen from Luther's tract against Erasmus. I may quote an acknowledgment of this, from the translator of Mosheim, whether to the honour or disgrace of Lutheranism, let every impartial judge determine, "The doctrines of *absolute predestination, irresistible grace, and human impotence*, were never carried to a more excessive length, nor maintained with a more virulent obstinacy, by any divine than they were by Luther; but in these times he has very few followers in this respect, even among those who bear his name." Of whom Dr. Mosheim also says, "That the doctrine of the Lutheran church hath changed by degrees its original form, and been improved and perfected in many respects, especially in the doctrines of *free will, predestination, and other points*, in which the Lutheran systems of divinity of an earlier date are so far surpassed by those of modern times." Perhaps theo-

logical doctors in this matter may still differ and prefer the *ancient truths* to *modern improvements*; nor think the lengths, to which Luther carried them, *excessive*, nor his defence of them either *virulent* or *obstinate*. Certain it is, that if there be any thing in Lutheranism peculiarly excellent, they plead for it with a very bad grace, who, in points of such importance, differ from their leader, and impeach his wisdom and his zeal in defence of what he at least esteemed of the greatest consequence. If Bossuet and the papal writers reproached them for their variations from their great reformer, who can dare to say, there is not a cause?

The doctrine of *justification by faith alone*, had never a clearer expositor than Luther; the plain and literal sense of the scripture he adhered to as to be always followed, in preference to all allegorical and fanciful interpretations; and his morals were as pure as his doctrines were evangelical. Nor can I by any means think, either Luther or Melancthon defective, as has been suggested, for not giving a *regular system of morality*, when, it is acknowledged, by those who presume to censure them, that they gave the fullest practical rules and instructions under the heads of the *law, sin, free will, faith, hope, and charity*. All other morals that spring not from these christian principles, I presume they disclaimed and disdained.

Whatever faults men were pleased to find with Luther's doctrine on the points above mentioned, when he was dead, none murmured disapprobation among the host of his followers, whilst he was alive. In the nature of the eucharist, Carlostadt had dared to differ from him, and to be in the right; in the rest they were unanimous. It must be admitted, that Luther was a sharp disputant, and hardly brooked opposition—that the summit of eminence, to which he was deservedly advanced, might make him jealous—or treat those who differed from him with too much asperity. He was a man of vehement spirit; the times were rude; and differences of opinion were not met with the candour and politeness of more modern days. I mean not this to excuse what is condemnable, but as a caution not to judge him rashly, if his zeal at any time appears to overstep the bounds of temperance. He was a man, a sinful man, a man of like passions with other corrupted creatures; exposed to peculiar provocations, and of a temper naturally irascible. Let those who blame him avoid his mistakes, and imitate his excellences.

I have before spoken of his harsh treatment of Carlostadt, whom his interest with the elector drove from his native land; and whatever was pretended as the cause, the real one may be found in their disputes about the eucharist. The same difference

of opinion produced his displeasure against Schwendkfeldt, a Saxon nobleman, of eminent piety and abilities, who inclining more to the simplicity of Zuinglius, and professing his opposition to the errors of Luther in this point of doctrine, experienced the same harsh treatment from his sovereign, and was driven into banishment.

His dispute with his disciple Agricola, (1538) on the moral law and its obligations, respected a subject of more importance than the ideas of *real presence*. Carrying his views of the abolition of the Mosaic obligations, to the moral, as well as the ceremonial law, Agricola pleaded, that we were no longer under it, as our rule of obedience, but under the gospel, as a nobler dispensation of faith working by love. From this man the term *Antinomian* became applied to those who followed this idea; and some are said to have pushed the doctrine to the support of the most dissolute and immoral practices, as perfectly compatible with a state of union with Christ. But this certainly was not the case with Agricola, and many others, that have been charged with Antinomian principles; who, however they may speak disparagingly of the law, as binding christian men, would disclaim the horrid conclusions which their adversaries have presumed to draw for them. Luther's vigilance and zeal engaged Agricola either to explain himself, or to retract what was erroneous in his positions, and he continued in his ministry.

But though Luther's personal weight, aided by his vehemence, and supported by the Protestant princes, who so highly revered him, contributed to maintain an appearance of unity in the Lutheran church, and to crush every attempt at innovation in the established opinions; yet no sooner were his eyes closed than it appeared evident, that in several points his dearest friends thought differently from him. The commanding authority, and warmth of Luther in a sort overawed the gentle, but most learned Melancthon. He would not start a subject of dispute: his spirit was yielding and conceding to a fault. No marvel he shunned the least opposition to his admired friend. When his master was taken from his head, and he became the leader of the Saxon ecclesiastical establishment, he would have purchased peace with Rome by tolerating, and submitting to, what Luther would have rejected with abhorrence. He could be even content to soften down the very doctrine which the great reformer placed as the criterion, *stantis aut cadentis ecclesie*, of the true or apostate church; and to admit some modification of *justification by faith alone*, by abating something from man's absolute incapacity to promote his own conversion unto God, and allowing the necessity of good

works for salvation. Though he had been silent on the controversy of the eucharist, and before coincided with Luther; he latterly could not receive the strong ideas of *real presence*, suggested by his friend, but wished at least the definition might be left so ambiguous, as to admit those who adopted the opinion of *symbol only*, in the eucharist, to friendly communion. No sooner had he therefore ventured to promulge openly, what he had before either suppressed or only modestly hinted, than the rigid Lutherans rose in arms against him. And those disturbances began, which to a man of his temper and feeling must have been peculiarly painful.

The first grand occasion of division in the Lutheran church, arose from the reference made to Melancthon and other Saxon divines, on the subject of the imperial decree, called the *Interim*, and how far they could submit to it. His pacific spirit counting no sacrifices too great for peace, persuaded acquiescence in all matters of *indifference*, to the emperor's edict. But in these indifferent matters, he reckoned doctrines of deep and essential consequence, in the eyes of Luther and his true followers, particularly in the *article of justification*. And as yielding was he respecting *ceremonies* and *papal jurisdiction*; which the great reformer would have spurned with abhorrence. No wonder therefore that Luther's most zealous disciples, with the learned Flaccus at their head, charged these accommodating divines with betrayal of the truth, and with apostacy from the vital principle of Lutheranism.

A sharp controversy therefore arose, concerning what could be called *indifferent*; and what ought, or ought not, to be yielded to Rome. This naturally led to points of the first consequence, respecting faith—good works—the prevention of grace—the co-operation of the human will—in all which Melancthon expressed himself in a language that Luther would have rejected with indignation. Since nothing could be further from his sentiments than modification on any of these subjects, respecting which he had declared himself in the most explicit manner. Nor would Melancthon's explication, that the *impressions of grace were accompanied with certain correspondent actions of the human will*, have been borne for a moment by the great master: and if not branded as absolutely heretical, by Flaccus, and his adherents, at least they exposed Melancthon and his followers to heavy charges of semi-pelagianism: to which no doubt such modes of expression led. They excited also just apprehensions, that even more was intended than expressed, under such unknown terms, in the nomenclature of Lutheran orthodoxy.

(1557.) Flaccus, the chief, in that amazing work of ecclesiastical learning, "the Mag-

deburg Centuriators," was advanced to the chair of divinity of Jena, by the zealous Lutheran sons of the deprived elector John, who had formed this seminary, with a view to maintain inviolate the pure doctrines of the great reformer. This gave him scope, as it more immediately called him to defend the master, and to attack his opposers. Thus the breach widened, and a schism was apprehended between the free-grace, and the semi-pelagian Lutherans.

(1560.) Strigelius, the disciple of Melancthon, maintained at Jena, in opposition to Flaccus, the freewill doctrine, and man's co-operation in conversion. For this he was accused by the professor to the duke, imprisoned and compelled to recant; or at least appear to do so, in order to obtain his discharge. It is grievous to observe, that the true protestant principles were so little followed; and each side courted the arm of civil power to aid the force on their arguments. I have entering on other controversies of less important subjects, which disturbed the peace of the Lutheran church, and were sure to give occasion of triumph and reproach to their popish adversaries.

During the life of Melancthon, the contest raged; nor was it quieted by his decease. His son-in-law Peucer, a man as respectable for his learning, as eminent for piety, a professor at Wittenberg, had formed a considerable party among the Saxon divines, who adopted with him the sentiments of Zuinglius (1571), respecting the eucharist, in preference to those of Luther; and to which Melancthon in his latter years acceded. These they wished to introduce into the Saxon church; and to alter the established doctrine of the *real presence*. A solemn convocation of divines was held at Dresden on the subject; and a formula of agreement drawn up, favourable to the friends of Peucer (1571), and denying the ubiquity of Christ's human body. At this the rigid Lutherans fired, and gaining the elector, under the dreaded apprehensions, that the foundations of Lutheranism were ready to be overturned, a new convention at Torgaw (1574), established the *real presence*, and instigated the elector to seize, imprison, and banish, all the secret Calvinists; and to reduce their followers by every act of violence, to renounce their sentiments, and confess the *ubiquity*. Ten years did the oppressed Peucer suffer imprisonment, in the severest manner, for his opinions: and proved, that persecution was not peculiar to popish ecclesiastics. Effectually to eradicate this dreaded innovation, and drive from Saxony and the Lutheran pale, all who inclined to the Helvetic opinion respecting Christ's body in the sacrament, the same divines who had drawn up the *decrees of Torgaw*, produced the *form of concord* (1577), in which, the *real*

manducation of Christ's body and blood in the eucharist was established, and heresy and excommunication laid on all who refused this, as an article of faith; with pains and penalties to be enforced by the secular arm. The bigotted Saxon established this *form of concord*, through the extent of his authority; and many other Lutheran churches adopted it. But what was pretended as a means of terminating this controversy, produced more violent dissensions than ever. All the Calvinistic, or reformed party, lifted up their voices against such a decision, not only as unscriptural in itself, but as tending in the strongest manner to preclude all christian union between real protestants. The favourers of the Zuinglian notions of the eucharist, felt the severity of the edicts. The moderate Lutherans themselves abhorred such hasty censures. The friends and disciples of the amiable Melancthon could not bear to see his sentiments thus treated: and from a variety of motives, the *form of concord* was rejected by a considerable, if not the larger part of the Lutheran church. Nor in Saxony itself was there wanting a vast number, who though compelled to suppress their opinions, waited only the favourable moment to shew themselves. This the death of the elector Augustus afforded (1586), and his successor being more favourable to the moderate Lutherans, they attempted to suppress the *form of concord*, and and *Crellius*, the first minister being on their side, they prepared the people for the change they meditated, by lesser alterations, such as the omission of *exorcism* which had been used in baptism; by a *catechism*, favourable to the Calvinistic opinions; and by a new edition of the Bible. But the rigid Lutherans, exactly like our High church and Sacheverel for ever, caught fire at these unallowed changes, making the nation think the church in danger; and the clergy, inflaming the populace, produced much tumult, and sharp interference of the magistracy. The tables turned on the death of the elector Christian I. (1591). The rigid Lutherans resumed their empire, and their adversaries were imprisoned and banished. The *form of concord* was restored to its vigour, and the unhappy *Crellius*, who had been the great support of the party, put to death (1601). On such juridical execution of protestants by protestants, originating in disputes, about religious opinions, if I could, I would fix a brand of reprobacy; and lift up my feeble voice against persecution of every kind. But I am conscious, whilst men are as they are, church power will always be abused, and unchristian intolerance wish to kindle the flames against all who may venture to differ from the dominant party. Indeed the most unlike the great Head of the Church are they, who thrust themselves into high places; and

whose pride and insolence are gratified in trampling upon their brethren. Ye followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, mark the man, that hates and injures his brother for his opinions: he is a murderer, in whatever church he is found.

The doctrines of Luther, on predestination and grace, were too uncongenial to the pride and wisdom of the unhumbled heart, not to excite strong opposition. Huber, of Wittemberg, distinguished himself in defence of the plan of *universal redemption*, which has been since generally adopted in the Lutheran church, but in those purer days of evangelical doctrine, provoked just indignation, and occasioned his deposition and banishment. Violence on all sides was carried to the extreme. The man who subscribes an established doctrine justly forfeits his advantages, when he renounces the ground of his tenure: but let him live as free as his brethren, and defend his sentiments in love, and in the spirit of meekness. The misery is, that in all these unhappy disputes, human passions rage, instead of the simple pursuit of truth and godliness.

To conclude: In the Lutheran church were found men great in every view; in erudition and piety. But, as must be the case universally, the multitude were only believers in the lump. The generality of clergy in every established church, enter it as a profession; and are too like their fellows in all worldly pursuits, and human passions. The faithful and really godly are everywhere comparatively few, who serve the Lord Christ out of a pure heart fervently, and regard their work as their wages. I doubt not the living members of Christ's body, within the Lutheran pale, in that day were many and glorious. At the first dawn of reformation, strict piety was more universally cultivated among the professors: but declensions early crept in with a peaceable establishment; and when no longer under the cross, the departure from truth and purity, presently appeared. Before the close of the century, Moshlem acknowledges, that, "the manners of the Lutherans were remarkably depraved—that multitudes offended the public by audacious irregularities—that discipline vanished, either through the carelessness or impotence of the clerical arm." And those who distinguished themselves from their brethren, by greater zeal, purity of doctrine, deadness to the world, heavenly-mindedness, and spirituality of conversation, were marked, and gained a name of peculiarity, that separated them from their fellows, content to bear a testimony, by their lives and labours, to a kingdom neither Lutheran nor Calvinist exclusively, but consisting in righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: the true spirit of the church universal, which

is neither of Paul, nor of Apollos, but of Christ.

II. *Of the Churches called Reformed, or Calvinistic.*

THE name of *Protestants*, equally applied to all dissenters from the church of Rome. As these separated into different communities, they were distinguished by different denominations; the term *reformed church* was therefore appropriated to those who, differing from the Lutheran opinions in points of doctrine or discipline, preferred, especially in the great articles respecting the real presence in the eucharist, the doctrine of Zuinglius and Calvin to Luther. And as Calvin was the most eminent, the several churches who adopted his sentiments, generally bore his name, as the Lutherans that of their great reformer. Not that Luther or Calvin pretended to support any doctrines, but what they deduced from the scriptures, and confirmed by the evidence of the fathers, especially Augustine. The Calvinistic churches, though united in the confession of the same fundamental articles of faith, in which indeed, the only union essential is to be sought, were formed on very different models; and chiefly followed the several forms of government, which subsisted in the countries where the reformation prevailed, and the different views which the rulers in different nations entertained of the most scriptural church order. For from the New Testament and the apostolic precedents, all professed to derive their several establishments. The greater body adopted the model of the Helvetic churches, and especially of Geneva, where Calvin presided, and had a chief influence over all those of the reformed profession. Switzerland, Germany, France, Scotland, Holland, and all the foreign Calvinistic churches erected the form of government called Presbyterian, in which a parity of rank was established among the ministers themselves; a synodical government, consisting of clergy and laity, elected to manage the concerns of the particular churches; and a general assembly of the whole church to decide on momentous cases, in each of their several dominions or districts. Yet this establishment was not exactly similar in any two churches, who held the same confession of faith, and maintained in the general outline, the same form of discipline and government.

The churches of England and Ireland chose to retain episcopacy in their government, as in their apprehension more congenial with monarchical government, and primitive practice; whilst in all the great articles of faith, they held with their foreign brethren, and maintained communion with them. This church formed a body, resembling the

state, sitting in two houses of convocation, under the same head, where all the great concerns ecclesiastical were to be settled, with the consent of the monarch.

In ceremonies, the reformed churches differed greatly. The first and great reformer Zuinglius, who began before Luther, his bold attack of popery, carried his reform far beyond him. Whilst Luther tolerated images, tapers, altars, exorcism, and auricular confession, he swept all the trappings of superstition away; reducing the worship to the standard of utmost simplicity, divested alike of garb or ornament. The other churches have admitted some ceremonies; the episcopal churches the most, as more conformed to the dignity of the hierarchy. The spirit of devotion hardly needs the adventitious helps which formality supposes important. Yet who will refuse his approbation of whatever may have a real tendency to enliven the worship, or engage the attention? Such surely will music be found, when under proper regulation.

Zurich, the cradle of the reformed, professed in the article of the Lord's Supper, the simple acknowledgment of its being a sign and nothing more, according to the opinion of Zuinglius, and his excellent and able associate Œcolampadius. Herein the Lutherans were at too great a distance to approach, and all efforts of conciliation proved abortive. As this was a matter of first concern in that day, it may be useful to observe the gradations of opinion on this subject, among the churches.

Zuinglius and his followers regarded the eucharist as a mere sign or symbol, of which all professing christians, whether regenerate, or unregenerate, might partake alike.

Calvin supposed the sign or symbol, to convey a sacramental pledge of blessing, and that a spiritual presence of Christ attended it to the regenerate and believing only; whilst to others the elements remained as common food: and this the church of England adopted.

Luther maintained, that the elements remained still bread and wine, but that a real presence of Christ united with them, in virtue of the ubiquity of his supposed human nature, and a real manducation of Christ's body followed; this was termed consubstantiation.

The popish doctors, contended for a real transmutation of the elements, which, under the form of bread and wine, lost their nature and substance, after consecration, and were actually changed into the very body and blood of Christ, by transubstantiation.

Zuinglius fell in battle (1531), attending with his exhortations his countrymen, as was the duty of his office. With this his adversaries presumed to upbraid him, and insult his memory, however undeserving reproach.

The triumph of the popish bigot, Sir Thomas More, speaks what spirit he was of: but his loss was more than repaired in Calvin, who soon after took the lead at Geneva, and was regarded as the patriarch of the reformed churches. His learning, piety and zeal, attracted from all countries students to Geneva, now become a kind of seminary to the reformed churches, as Wittenberg had been to the Lutheran; and from thence they issued forth, to spread the opinions, and to recommend the model of their admired teacher. Hence a bond of union was formed through England, Holland, Germany, France and Switzerland, by similarity of studies, and uniformity in opinion, respecting the grand theological tenets; regarding as a matter of more indifference the system of government and discipline which each formed for themselves.

Luther had given the civil magistrate the supreme power in ecclesiastical regulations, and Zuinglius had therein concurred with him; yet, whilst he made the clergy dependent on the civil government, he admitted a difference of rank, and appointed a superintendent over the clergy of his canton.

Calvin maintained the independence of the church on the magistrate, as competent to form its own government and regulations, in synods and consistories, under the protecting power of the civil ruler, with perfect parity among the presbyters.

The church of England steered a middle course. All supremacy of legal dominion being in the king, and the two houses of parliament. Their decisions only constitute law. But the clergy in convocation, with the consent of the monarch, may form regulations binding on their own body, as the bye-laws of a corporation, though not universally obligatory. For a long while past this convocation hath ceased to meet for ecclesiastical affairs; at least they only meet and adjourn, without proceeding to any business.

France, Holland, and Scotland, with Geneva, adopted the government which Calvin recommended. The Swiss persevered in that established by Zuinglius; and the churches of England and Ireland pursued with episcopacy a mixed regulation, subordinate to the parliamentary supremacy.

But the great point which distinguished this leader of the reformed churches, respected the decrees of God, and their consequences on the everlasting state of men, as flowing from his own sovereign pleasure and will. Nothing that Calvin advanced spoke stronger than Luther had previously maintained on the subject of predestination and grace; the impotence of the human will to good; and the utter corruption of our fallen nature. But after his decease, the Lutherans in general departed from the tenets of their great

reformer, to the semi-pelagian system of co-operation. Against this, the Genevan apostle, ably seconded by his colleagues, Beza, Zanchius, and others, strongly contended and supported the system, since called the Calvinistic, with such force of argument, that it was universally adopted through all the reformed churches, and became their discriminating feature; and must continue so, as long as the Helvetic confession, the catechism of Heidelberg, the decisions of the synod of Dort, the assembly's catechism, and the thirty-nine articles of the church of England continue un repealed. For, whatever change of sentiments may have been wrought at Geneva, in France, Holland, Germany, or Great Britain; whilst these formularies continue the express bonds of union in the several churches, in which none can enter into holy orders, but by their solemn consent and approbation to the truths which these formulas of doctrine contain, so long whatever difference of sentiment may be entertained by individuals, ministers, or others, the majority or minority, none can be inferred in the church, which remains for ever such, as the articles of her faith declare.

The disputes occasioned by the opposition raised to these predestinarian sentiments, form a principal part of the history of the reformed churches; as in each of them they were attacked by men of the greatest acuteness and learning; and, as they present a revolting aspect in the view of every unhumiliated conscience, and unenlightened mind, it was impossible, humanly speaking, but those very consequences should result, which we are about shortly to detail; and which are equally singular and observable; to wit—That for a long while past the majority of teachers and people in all the reformed churches have been departing farther and farther from the free grace and predestinarian system; and yet the original establishment of these doctrines, in their several formularies, and confessions of faith, remains exactly as they were fixed from the beginning.

Switzerland, divided between popish and protestant cantons, hath continued since the days of Calvin, the same formula of doctrine and discipline.

France united herself with Geneva and her venerable fathers, Farel and Beza; who, after Calvin's decease, spread the truths he taught with equal zeal and success; but that unhappy country, torn with civil and religious feuds, suffered severely. The party of the reformed, and the catholics, were not very unequally balanced, though the preponderance rested with the latter. Yet the Huguenots, a name given to the French protestants, were numerous even at court, and among the principal personages of the kingdom. The dreadful massacre of the protestants on St. Bartholemew's day (1572),

which every tongue has execrated, kindled afresh the fires of dissension, hardly extinguished; and through seas of blood, Henry of Navarre, the heir of the throne, contended for his birth-right against his popish and inveterate enemies. The great obstruction was his profession of the reformed religion. Honour long maintained the struggle, for conscience with such a man could have presented a feeble barrier. A change of religion seated him at last peaceably on the throne. Henry the Fourth, surnamed the Great, was a man of intrepid valour, a consummate politician, and in his general manners esteemed as the most amiable of men; withal professedly a zealous protestant; but, at the same time, the slave of appetite, and indulging his passions in such impurity and licentiousness, as disgraced the name of christian. It little signified, indeed, to what church he belonged. His politic apostasy procured peace for the body which he deserted, as well as the throne for himself; and the edict of Nantz confirmed to the reformed the most ample toleration, with free admission to all places of honour and profit; and chambers of justice, where they enjoyed an equal number of assessors of their own profession. A third part of the kingdom at least had then embraced the reformed religion (1598).

(1560.) Knox, the famous Scotch reformer, and pupil of Calvin, brought from Geneva the reformed sentiments and discipline, and after furious struggles established them through Scotland.

England had long been preparing, before Luther or Calvin arose, for a reform; and when first the separation was formed from the see of Rome, was in peculiar circumstances. During the life of Henry the Eighth, a man of violence, lawless in appetite, and destitute of all religion, England, as a body, could not be properly said to have had any religious sentiments, or church established, when the despotic will of the monarch made what alterations he pleased, and sent to the flames, or the scaffold, those who dared to question his supremacy, or to controvert his decisions. Cranmer, the friend of Calvin, and in opinion one with him, respecting doctrines, was high in the favour of this capricious and cruel monarch. By improving every offered occasion, and yielding, where he found opposition useless, though often exposed to the most imminent ruin, he endeavoured to avert all the evil, and do all the good which was in his power. But no sooner had death removed the tyrant (1547), and placed the amiable Edward on the throne, than the whole ecclesiastical establishment was modelled according to the reformed system, leaving the bishops, and the discipline of the church, nearly as they had been before. The abuses of popery

were all removed, or at least it was designed they should be; and England became a capital member of the reformed church. The excellent Peter Martyr, the intimate friend of Calvin, was invited over, and seated in the professor's chair at Oxford; and both universities maintained with zealous attachment the doctrines termed Calvinistic, and which the thirty-nine articles confirmed; as the established profession of the kingdom. Geneva was avowed a sister church, united in doctrine, though different in government and discipline: and herein, by an express declaration of Calvin, bound to exercise mutual indulgence. This flourishing period continued till the reign of Mary (1553); when many eminent ministers being martyred, the rest who escaped her bloody bishops, dispersed and fled into the foreign protestant churches, and were received at Geneva with the most fraternal hospitality. When divine providence, on the demise of Mary, placed Elizabeth on the throne (1558), these persecuted exiles returned to the land of their nativity, restored to their charges, and exercising their ministry in the church, from which they had been expelled: but, during their absence, their habits of intimacy and acquaintance with Geneva and her divines, as well as of the other reformed churches, had raised scruples in their minds respecting the lawfulness of many rites continued in the church of England; and a wish to reduce that establishment to a conformity with the greater simplicity of the foreign reformed churches. The body of the dignified clergy was against the exiles: many had conformed from popery, and wished to keep as near as possible to the church which they had renounced, in hopes of another change: but above all, the imperious Elizabeth, who had inherited an abundant portion of her father's tyrannical spirit, held her supremacy with a jealous tenacity, and set her face against all innovations; and though both her interest and inclination seemed to concur with her education, and to make her a determined protestant, yet she had no objection to the exterior pomp of worship, and rather appeared willing to enlarge than curtail the ritual ceremonies. Nor did the strict and rigid manners of the exiles at all appear congenial to her spirit, which, with all her apparent zeal for the outward profession of the protestant religion, seemed totally destitute of the power of it, in her conscience and her conduct. Her imperious temper; her feminine vanity; her duplicity and cruelty to the Queen of Scots; her profane swearing; and a multitude of acts utterly inconsistent with the purity and gentleness of the religion of the Son of God, might be consistent with the character of a great queen, but utterly incompatible with that of a good christian.

Far from conceding any thing to the wishes of those who began to obtain the name of Puritan, from the purer worship and manners which they professed to seek, the queen published the Act of Uniformity, and enforced it with all the rigour of her authority. The Puritans, exasperated by a treatment, which, after their long and eminent sufferings, they thought they so little deserved, and so little expected, abstained not from sharp and bitter invectives against their oppressors; and their obstinacy and their scrupulosity were often as extreme, as the insolence and intolerance of their adversaries were blameable. The best, the gentlest, the most peaceable on both sides, were little heard amidst the passions of heated opponents: neither party was disposed to yield; and the breach daily widened. The refusal to grant a liberal toleration, and the determination to suppress the murmurs of the discontented, by the strong hand of power, rendered them only more inimical to government, and united among themselves; which otherwise they would not have been: for, whilst the most violent laboured to overturn the whole ecclesiastical establishment, and to reduce it to their favourite Genevan model, the more moderate would have gladly accepted a few concessions, removing the most obnoxious grounds of their objection to the forms established; of which the article of vestments, the sign of the cross in baptism, and some similar rites, made a formidable part: for, as to the *doctrines*, they were perfectly consentient, and equally tenacious of them, perhaps more so than their adversaries. Nor were they averse to the name of bishop or his superintendence, as to the pomp, and wealth, and political engagements of the prelate: for as yet the English bishops claimed not their office by divine right, but under the constitution of their country; nor pleaded for more than two orders of apostolic appointment, bishops and deacons. (See Burnet's Reform, vol. I. p. 324.)

Bishop Bancroft widened the breach, (1588) by asserting in a sermon, preached at Paul's Cross, that bishops were a distinct order from priests, and that by divine right; and archbishop Whitgift supported the assertion.

This tended farther to irritate, as the archbishop and his associates refused to consider any as invested with the ministerial character who were not episcopally ordained; and demanded of those, who had been set apart in the other reformed churches, to be re-ordained before they were permitted to minister in the church of England: as if there could be no ministers, no sacraments, no ordinances, no church, without bishops, priests, and deacons of episcopal ordination: and this as much offended the whole body of

the reformed churches abroad, as it justly irritated the Puritans at home.

The cathedrals, their worship, and pomp, were peculiarly obnoxious to the Puritans, as were the dignitaries that occupied the stalls in them: and as they desired to banish the pageantry of devotion, they also wished a greater purity of discipline; and that all who were open offenders, or of dubious character, should be excluded from the communion of the faithful: but that such exclusion from the table of the Lord, should not expose them to any civil or worldly incommodity, in reputation, person, or estate.

The high commission court, and its arbitrary inquisitorial proceedings were strongly and justly objected to: but such an engine was too congenial to the despotic temper of the monarch, not to be sure to meet her strenuous support.

Thus began those troubles in the church, the fearful effects of which, the next generation peculiarly experienced: where each equally blameable in their turn, abused their power in persecution; and instead of liberty of conscience, and generous toleration, smote with the sword of the civil magistrate, all that refused to conform to their several exclusive establishments.

The conflicts of the contending parties I mean not to dwell upon. I can only just notice, that among the Puritans themselves, though united against the church, much division prevailed: while some would be content with less, and others claimed more reforms, a variety of sects commenced in embryo, which a future age hatched into life. Of these I shall only notice that denomination of dissenters which now first began to appear, and afterwards becoming so dominant under the protectorate, declined at the restoration, but at present seems greatly reviving.

The Independents trace their most distinguished origin to Robert Brown (1581), a man of abilities, who affected to form a purer church, on the apostolic model, than had yet existed. He consented to all the Calvinistic doctrines, alike at that day admitted by churchmen and Puritans; but in ecclesiastical government, he suggested a new plan of congregational churches, of which antiquity had furnished no precedent, at least since the apostolic age: each separate and distinct—consisting of those only who worshipped in the same place—exempt from all jurisdiction but of themselves—electing their own pastors—and dismissing them by the vote of a majority of members—admitting and expelling from their society in the same mode. Their pastor was distinguished neither by garb nor superiority from the rest; except his leading the devotions, ministering the sacraments, and addressing the congregation by appointment

of the people. They permitted him not to minister baptism or the communion, except to those of his own society; yet did they not restrict the office of teacher to one, but admitted any member who offered and was approved by the church, to exhort and edify their brethren: withal highly intolerant, they refused all communion with every other society of christians, formed upon a different model from their own. In many of these points the independents have been since more enlarged and liberal. Brown, after flying his country for his opposition to the governing powers, and attempting to form churches on the independent model in the Dutch provinces, returned to England, conformed to the church established; and is said to have finished his latter days at Achurch in Northamptonshire, in a manner disgraceful to any church. A part of one of the congregations which he quitted at Leyden, transported themselves to America, and founded at Boston the first independent society on that continent.

Yet, amidst these disputes and contentions, respecting the forms of religion, a great and glorious number of living evidences of pure christianity appeared. Many of the writings which have reached us, witness the excellence of their authors: and the exemplariness of their conduct, and their zeal for their adorable Master's service, demonstrate that the reformed churches in this land were then a praise in the earth. It is much to be lamented, that a greater spirit of meekness and mutual forbearance was not exercised by men, who, professing to unite in all the divine doctrines, and the holy influence of them, put an importance upon the ceremonials of religion, to which they seem so little entitled. The one side too intolerant and tenacious of authority, not disposed to admit reasonable claims, or to indulge conscientious scruples: the other, stiff and unbending, dissatisfied with any concessions or alterations, which came not up to the extent of their requisitions; and charging many of the bishops as tyrannical and anti-christian, who certainly meant to be neither; and will, by all impartial posterity, be reckoned among the excellent of the earth. The great Head of the Church hath long since judged both parties, and I doubt not, they are together praising him, who pitieth our infirmities, and pardoneth our iniquities. Certain it is, that many of the bishops of that day were laborious pastors, and edified the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, by their examples and preaching, as they did the whole church by their writings; and it is as certain, that many of those who dared not conform to the establishment, were ministers equally pious, learned, and exemplary, adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour by the purity

of their lives, and greatly edified the little flocks which had been collected by their labours: and notwithstanding the weight of authority against them, they continued rising in public estimation, and increasing the numbers of the dissatisfied. These were of two sorts, State Puritans, who wished to introduce a greater measure of civil liberty into the government, and were the political chiefs, who watched their opportunity to turn the discontents of their brethren to the accomplishment of their own designs. The others were Church Puritans, who desired no alterations in government, and would have acquiesced in the ecclesiastical establishment with some modifications, but wished a reduction of unnecessary ceremonies, and to separate the church from political connections with state; so as to be less a worldly sanctuary, as to them it appeared. It was something observable, that the men among the conformists themselves, who neither objected to the forms or the government of the church, if they manifested peculiar zeal in preaching; strictness of manners; and abstained from the theatre, and what the world calls the innocent amusements of life; they also received the brand of Puritanism, a circumstance highly favourable to the non-conforming party, as impressing an idea, that with them the greatest spirituality of conduct, and the power of godliness, was to be found, since all who shewed the most of this in their conversation, bore their reproach.

The holy lives, and the triumphant deaths of many of the men of that generation, are on record. Their flourishing congregations, and the attention paid to the ministry of those most faithful labourers, shew a relish for the truths which they preached, and a desire to be followers of such as through faith and patience inherited the promises. I hear them often branded as hypocrites, and their piety interpreted as outrageous and enthusiastic; but I am not at all satisfied, that those from whom the reproaches of this sort come, are the best judges of evangelical truth, or the noblest patrons of christian conversation. There were, no doubt, many hypocrites, and such as, under the cloak of religious appearance, had political ends in view; but this will be only a farther proof of the fact, that a life of exemplary godliness was common, and highly respected; and therefore demonstrates a general spread of ** vital religion* among us, in that day.

The United Provinces, rescued from the tyrannical dominion of Philip, as well as emancipated from the Romish yoke, by many a hard fought battle, and persevering courage,

began to breathe in established liberty (1579), which defied the impotent malice of their enemies. The furnace of affliction always brightens the church of God. A great and faithful host of preachers of the everlasting gospel arose, and the bands of religion strengthened them from every conflict. A golden god, and the spirit of commerce, with the wealth it produces, had not as yet extended its baneful influence over the men of that generation. They had started in the race vigorously; and adopting the reformed system of doctrine, adorned it by a purity, sobriety, and temperance, that was distinguishing.

A great number of the Bohemian and Moravian brethren, joined by the persecuted followers of Huss, and driven by the catholic clergy into Poland, united with the reformed churches. They had at first connected themselves with Luther and his associates, to whom they sent their confession of faith and discipline, and were not disapproved, though in many things different from the Lutheran (1522). But when they were expelled Bohemia, retaining their own discipline, they adopted the Calvinistic doctrine. I apprehend a branch still remained in Moravia, and Bohemia, united with the Lutherans, from whom the present Moravian brethren are descended; who, in doctrine, approach much nearer the Lutheran confession than the Helvetic, though in their church government they have retained episcopacy, and peculiarities very distinguishing. If their ancestors were as excellent as many of that denomination in the present day, we must reckon them among the living members of the real church of the redeemed.

The Poles, from them, and other Germans, received the true evangelical religion; and Bohemians, Lutherans, and Swiss confederated to defend themselves; exercising towards each other mutual indulgence, and bearing the name of United Brethren.

Many of the German principalities, Hannau, Nassau, Isengberg, and others, towards the end of this century, joined the reformed churches; and the progress of Calvinism in Denmark was considerable, though the dominant religion continued Lutheran.

It may not be improper to close the account of the reformed church, with some strictures on the character of the eminent personage, who was so highly distinguished in his day, and has ministered so much matter of admiration to his friends, and obloquy to his enemies.

Calvin was a native of Noyon, in Picardy: his mental powers were great; his diligence indefatigable; his erudition equal to the first of that age; his eloquence was manly; his style perspicuous, and admirably pure; as a minister of the sanctuary, as a

* I venture to use this phraseology however much it hath been derided by infidels and scoffers; and I do it on purpose to express my views of true christianity, as a divine principle of life, implanted by the Spirit of God

professor of divinity, his labours were immense. Yet, in the zenith of his power, his income amounted only to twenty-five pounds a-year; and he refused the increase of stipend which was offered him by the magistracy, choosing rather to give an example of disinterestedness to his successors. His morals were strictly exemplary; his piety fervent; his zeal against offenders in doctrine, or manners, rigid. He had much opposition to encounter, but he subdued it, by persevering ardour, and dignity of conduct. His influence at Geneva was vast, and he was looked up to by the reformed in general, as their oracle. Every where his name was mentioned with reverence. Tenacious in point of doctrine, he met an host of opponents, who rejected the system of unconditional decrees. Controversy sharpened his spirit, and he is accused of abusing his power and influence in acts of oppression towards his adversaries. The sufferings of Gruet, Bolsac, Castallo, Ochinus, but particularly of the ever remembered Servetus, put to death by the Genevan magistrates, for his Socinian and infidel opinions, have brought an odium on Calvin's name, as having instigated them to such acts of violence; at least not having exerted the authority which he was known to possess, to prevent the shedding of blood: and if this were a just charge, let the reproach rest upon him.

However dangerous such opinions may be supposed to the peace of society, or the souls of men, many now doubt the right of any penal inflictions for them; and much more the justice of putting any man to death on that account, however impious or atheistical he may be. But, in truth, the rights of conscience were as little understood in that day among the protestants as among the papists; and obstinate heresy, or daring blasphemy, supposed to deserve the most condign punishment, and adjudged to prison, and to death.

Far from attempting to justify these severities, I esteem this as the foulest blot in Calvin's otherwise fair escutcheon; nor do I think the spirit of the times any exculpation for violating the plainest dictates of the word of God and common sense, that "liberty of conscience and private judgment, are every man's birth-right:" and where nothing immoral, or tending by some overt act to disturb the peace of society appears, there all punishment for matters of opinion must be utterly unchristian, and unjustifiable.

Calvin's advice to the English puritans, respecting conformity, was singularly conciliatory. He wished them in all matters of indifference to submit; and where they could not, to give as little offence as possible. Supposing with the wisest part of the reformed church, that "Jesus Christ having left no express directions respecting eccle-

siastical government, every nation might establish the form most agreeable to itself, provided nothing was enjoined contrary to the word of God." That he was a great man, his enemies will not deny—that he was a good man, they who knew him best bore the most unimpeachable witness:—and what none dare dispute, those who were the most distinguished in every protestant country, for learning and piety, courted his acquaintance, and gloried in his friendship; than which, perhaps, a more unequivocal proof cannot be produced of human excellence.

The reformed Church exhibited a constellation of worthies, many of whom have been mentioned, and more are omitted, whose writings demonstrate their deep erudition, and theological knowledge; and, who are still consulted for their critical skill, as well as for practical improvement. Their system was to open the word of God, as the fountain of wisdom, admitting nothing to be taught, as divine truth, but what was clearly deducible from thence; avoiding all far-fetched interpretations, and scholastic subtleties. And on this basis of the pure word of God alone, have the reformed churches been erected; and amidst the deplorable apostacy from all religion, subsist in vigour to the present day.

III. *The Heterodox Church.*

A THIRD body of protestants, who are formed into church order, and profess christianity, I have ventured, without meaning any reproach, to class under the title of Heterodox; as they differed so essentially and fundamentally from the rest of the reformed. These rose up under several names and forms; to the chief of which I shall shortly advert, and their history.

It was hardly possible, when the spirit of reformation, after years of darkness invited to the perusal of the scriptures, and to the most unlimited freedom of inquiry into their contents, that a diversity of sentiments should not arise among the learned; from whom, and their conceit of superior intelligence, all heresies have usually commenced. Of the multitudes therefore of those, who rose up in opposition to the popish abuses, some pushed their objections even to the Bible itself; and rejected, as we have seen, revelation, and the very being of a God. The old heresies of Arian and Pelagian origin, revived; and various shades of degradation of Christ's divinity, brought him down from essential Godhead, to the lowest state of humanity, in the system called Socinianism: unless we shall admit the modern Unitarians to a lower step; who with the Davidists, a sect in Transylvania, refused every address, or honour of mediation, to Jesus

Christ. Indeed the gradations scarcely deserve consideration, as the difference between the true God and no God is such, as hardly to admit of any thing intermediate. This sect appears to derive its origin from Italy, and its name from Faustus Socinus; and to have spread among a few individuals of considerable literature; but not to have been moulded into form, and an establishment, till it visited Poland; where, after some vicissitudes, the city of Racow, in the palatinate of Sandomir, became the seminary and metropolitan seat of this heresy; and the Racovian Catechism their confession of faith (1574). The leading principle of the sect appears to be, that, "whatever surpasses the limits of human comprehension is to be excluded from the christian profession." The mystery of the Trinity—the incarnation of the Son of God—and the Deity of the Spirit—are therefore, consequently, utterly re-nounced in their creed. Respecting the article of baptism, they admitted only adults; and re-baptised those who joined them from other communions. They were considerably divided among themselves; and though they made many zealous efforts from Racow, to spread their tenets into other countries, they met with very little success, being everywhere watched with a jealous eye, and often punished by both Lutherans and Calvinists, as well as committed to the inquisition, under the Roman pale.

It is observable that some of the most zealous disciples of Socinianism were physicians, as Servetus, whose fate is well known; and whose turbulent spirit brought him to his untimely end, inexcusable as the instruments were who embred their hands in his blood.

Blandrata (1563), another physician, sent into Transylvania at the request of Prince Sigismund, laboured with equal zeal and more success; and with his associates spread their opinions, and procured a peaceable establishment, and open profession of their faith there, to this day. Though their numbers have not been great in any place, they have maintained an existence, and in the desolations of pure christianity, have gained proselytes in countries, into which at first they found no admission; as in England; where an effort, though with no great success, has been made to revive the Unitarian and Socinian notions with some deviations from their original. The indifference to all religion, has permitted them peaceably to exist; at the same time, that it hath been unfavourable to their progress; as these opinions suit not the multitude, and the few who choose to be free-thinkers, and treat revelation cavalierly, rather prefer to make no profession of christianity at all.

The peaceableness of the Socinian principles, which in their most ancient cate-

chism, forbade oaths, or the resistance of injury or oppression, made them much less observable than the sect of the Anabaptists, with which they were often classed, the cause of their coincidence in the point of baptism, however different in other particulars. These last indeed excited the greatest disturbances, required the strong arm of power to subdue them, and brought upon themselves the heaviest censures of the reformed, whether Lutherans or Calvinists.

Amidst the agitations of those days, arose this sect; presuming to found a new church, in which every member should be a true and real saint; and their leaders, under a sure divine impulse, and armed with miraculous powers against all opposition. Under Muntzer, Stubner, Stork, and John of Leyden, a tumultuous multitude declared war against all magistracy, and proposed to erect a new christocracy, in which they expected the Saviour himself personally to appear, and to rule the nations by them and their followers. The first inundation was swept away as above recorded, and the leaders destroyed. But the sect subsisted, and continued to disseminate the same hopes, and to make the same pretensions. Not that all who were included in the name, were alike turbulent in their principles, or fanatical in their expectations. Many of them appear to be persons of real piety, seduced by the hope of a purer and better state of the christian church; and only held in common with the rest, the necessity of adult baptism, by immersion. The different countries where they spread, concurred in exerting every means of suppressing them; and abstained not from cruelties, which disgraced the christian name; and which, as hath been often proved, the constancy and intrepidity of the sufferers, braving the savageness of their persecutors, turned to the credit and advancement of their cause. The magistrate absurdly involved all who bore the name of Anabaptist in the same criminality; however harmless the visionary hopes of many were, compared with the errors and turbulence of others. And because an incurable heretic in the eye of a protestant, as well as a papist, was still an object for the sword and coercion of the established government, they suffered severely; so inadequately was true christian liberty yet understood.

On the destruction of Munster, with its tailor king, and the dispersion of those who escaped the fury of their enemies, the fugitives, persecuted in every place, were reduced very low, and saw the extinction of their sect approaching: when Menno, a Frieland, who had been a popish priest, and, as he owns, a notoriously wicked man, was by frequenting their assembly reclaimed (1536); and being a person of singular abilities,

joined the society, and became their chief. His indefatigable labours from Holland to Livonia, amidst innumerable dangers, greatly increased the number of his followers. The gentleness of his spirit, the piety of his conduct, the power of his preaching; and his unwearied zeal, gave weight to his advice. His wisdom also removed the most objectionable parts of the Anabaptist tenets, and moulded them into a consistence, far less offensive to the rest of their christian brethren. He retained still some of the particular doctrines of the sect, respecting baptism—the millenium—the unlawfulness of war—and of oaths—and the exclusion of all magistracy from their communion—but he condemned all their past turbulence, polygamy, and pretences to inspiration: recommending the greatest peaceableness of conduct, even to non-resistance, and the strictest purity of morals, without which none were to be admitted, or abide in their communion. Under so prudent a leader, the society established order, and obtained respectability. Divisions among themselves indeed greatly weakened their cause; which all Menno's prudence could not appease. A rigid sect arose affecting peculiar strictness of discipline, and hurling excommunications against their brethren on the slightest occasions. This produced a separation into the rigid and moderate Anabaptists, and endless debates of too little consequence to dwell upon.

In Holland, under that great friend of liberty, William Prince of Orange, they obtained a peaceable settlement, and liberty of conscience; having generously assisted him with money in a great emergence. From thence they are supposed to have migrated to England. But those who have settled with us, differ still much from the ancient and modern Menonites; and more among themselves: for holding as the distinguishing feature of their party, the article of baptism, nothing can be more remote from each other than the general baptists, who have embraced the Arminian tenets, and the particular Baptists, who strongly adhere to those of Calvin, and the reformed churches. And of these latter, a great difference remains betwixt those who admit mixed com-

munion, and those who refuse it to any but their own peculiar sect. A few also observe the Jewish Sabbath, as their day of worship, in preference to the Lord's Day, and are termed Seventh Day Baptists.

When I have ranked the first Anabaptists under the head of heterodox, with their fanatical opinions; I wish by no means to be understood as comprehending the Menonites, or modern congregations of Baptists, on any line with the Socinian and Arian heresy; far otherwise. After Menno had purged this denomination from the most exceptionable tenets, I have no doubt, that many of his followers and himself deserve a name in the church of the living God, and were as true and real members of Christ's body, as the excellent in the reformed and Lutheran churches. And whoever candidly weighs their doctrines and practices in the present day must allot them a place among the faithful, as a general body, notwithstanding their tenaciousness on the point of baptism. Indeed in all other things they seem very nearly united with their reformed brethren, respecting the fundamental articles of the christian faith: are exemplary in their zeal to promote the salvation of souls by Jesus Christ; and exhibit respectable specimens of those who walk so, as we have Christ for an example. Through the weakness of our intellect, and the infirmity of the flesh, it is not the lot of mortals to be of one mind, nor of real christians to form a complete system of unity of opinion. But one thing they desire to do, to hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and to be of one heart, where they are not perfectly joined in the same sentiments. And though they occupy separate communions, and assemble not in the same places, or with the same forms of worship, yet all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, will love one another out of a pure heart fervently. In a better world we shall be still more closely united, and be one fold under one Shepherd. How should this prospect and hope mortify the spirit of prejudice and bigotry in every heart, and lead us to greater enlargement and mutual forbearance!

CENTURY XVII.

CHAPTER I.

PROGRESS OF THE EXTERNAL CHURCH.

AFTER ages of gloomy superstition, the reign of ignorance, and primeval night, we have seen the Sun of righteousness rising with healing in his wings, to dispel the darkness, and illumine the path, which alone can lead the faithful to the light of eternal day.

The struggle in Europe, between truth and error, had been long and obstinate; and, however blessed the issue, the effects of the contest were greatly to be deplored, as having produced wars, which desolated the face of many countries, and conflicts in all the lands of christendom; sometimes as fatal to the persecutors, as to the persecuted.

The combatants now had in a sort rested on their arms, and precluded, by the peace of Augsburg, from attempting any considerable inroads on each others territories by violence, the catholics and protestants began to plan how they might extend their influence over the regions which had been lately discovered. The former, especially, hoped thereby to recover some indemnity in the new continent, for their losses in the old.

Herein, indeed, the catholics possessed a great and manifest advantage, not only as united under one spiritual head, but also because the grand discoveries had been made by those who professed the faith of Rome, and continued under her obedience. These all equally wished with the popes themselves, to propagate their own religion, and thus confirm a surer and safer dominion over those whom they had brought under the yoke, or hoped by monkish auxiliaries more easily to subdue. Nothing could more exactly concur with the ambitious views of the papal see. A host of missionaries rushed into the battle, zealously disposed to spread the knowledge of such christianity as they held, through all the countries into which the arms or commerce of Spain and Portugal had penetrated. We have seen the institution of Jesuits expressly devoted to this object: nor were the other orders, roused by their zeal and emulation, behind them in the work.

To direct their efforts most effectually for spreading the popish religion, and bringing the subjected nations, and others, within her pale, was among the most important objects of the church of Rome. With this

view the Pope established a congregation of Cardinals, (1622), *de propaganda fide*, whose name expressed their office. To defray every expense, a vast endowment, successively increased, furnished the most ample means. The missionaries were educated, conveyed, and supplied with every necessary. Seminaries were established for such heathen converts as should be sent to Europe from the different nations. Books were printed in all languages for the use of the missions. A provision was made for erecting schools, and affording the poor assistance, whether by medicine, or under any temporal want. In short, every thing which could forward the missions was liberally supplied. France copied the example of Rome (1663), and formed an establishment for the same purposes. Regiments of friars, black, white, and grey, were ready for embarkation, however distant the voyage, or perilous the service.

The Jesuits claimed the first rank, as due to their zeal, learning, and devotedness to the holy see. The Dominicans, Franciscans, and other orders, disputed the palm with them: and jealous of their superiority, as is the case usually betwixt rivals for fame, they impeached the purity of their motives; imputed their zeal to ambitious purposes; and accused them of subjecting their converts to their own order, with a view to make merchandise of them. Into these accusations probably much truth entered, but more envy. Indeed, the religion which any of these taught, was almost, if not altogether, as far removed from the simplicity that is in Christ, as the Paganism from which the converts were drawn. From the commencement of the missions, the congregation of cardinals has been employed in hearing and examining innumerable memorials and criminations against the Jesuits, the most grievous and disgraceful to the christian name. I confess, after considering the accusations and the avowed principle of popery, "That every fraud and artifice is pious, that tends to promote the interest of the Romish Church," the Jesuits seem fully vindicated. Admitting this allowed principle, they acted wisely. None can refuse them the praise of indefatigable labour; and little doubt can be entertained, that the issue of their missionary efforts would have been very different from what has happened, if they had not been so often checked in their career: their fidelity to the several states,

under whose patronage they acted, rendered suspicious; and their devotedness to the see of Rome itself questioned. Their rivals insinuated, that they meant only the glory, riches, and increase of their own order; and sacrificed to these every other consideration. Whether this was really the case or not, their steps appear directed with the most consummate skill, and crowned with astonishing success. They studied the characters of those with whom they had to do, and suited themselves alike to the peasant as the noble. They selected from their society, the instruments best qualified for their several spheres of action. They were physicians, astronomers, mathematicians, painters, musicians, artists, in every occupation, that could render their talents subservient to missionary purposes. Their gentle and insinuating manners gained the confidence of the natives where they resided. They made themselves agreeable as useful to the superior ranks: they condescended to instruct the meanest; they consulted the different inclinations and habits of the several nations, and the individuals of each. In short, they determined to become all things to all men, that they might obtain the great object in their view. The new world, and the Asiatic regions, were the chief field of their labours. They penetrated into the untutivated recesses of America; civilized the savages, and won them to habits of industry. They visited the untried regions of Siam Tonkin, and Cochin-China. They entered the vast empire of China itself; insinuated themselves into the confidence of that suspicious people, and numbered millions among their converts. They dared affront the dangers of the tyrannical government of Japan, and even there extended their conquests in a manner almost incredible. In India they assumed the garb of adherents of the Brahmins; and boasted on the coasts of Malabar of a thousand converts baptised in one year by a single missionary. They could alike familiarise themselves with the magnificence and luxury of the court of Peking, or live on water and vegetables, like the Jogis; and whatever their adversaries may object to the looseness of their moral system, the conduct of the missionaries was unimpeachable; otherwise they had neither attracted or preserved the veneration of their disciples—if they admitted of relaxation, it was for them, and not for themselves.

That their sufferings were great, as their labours were successful, we have the most authentic evidence. The dreadful massacres in China and Japan, proved them sincere; and at least, as true Catholics as any at Rome, or elsewhere.

Respecting the two great points hid to their charge of endeavouring to reconduce the Christian God, and the Christian doctrine

to the prejudices of the disciples of Confucius, much may be said in their vindication.

1. With regard to the name of God. The use of the word *Tien*, which communicated the idea of Deity to a Chinese, might surely be adopted without offence: and if explained, be equally proper, as any other term of the Hebrew or Greek language.

2. With regard to the rites, and offerings paid to their departed ancestors, something more objectionable may be found. To us who are no papists it must appear equally indifferent, whether the respect be paid to Confucius or a great grandfather, or to St. Januarius, or St. Crispin. And if these rites were only respectful memorials, and no idolatrous worship meant, or offered, perhaps as much or more might be pleaded for them than for any European saints, many of whom are the creatures of imagination, and never had an existence.

I wonder not that those who had borne the burden and heat of the day, should object to have priests of other orders sent from France and Italy to preside over, and direct the missions which their labours had established, and count themselves insulted by such interference; and more than this, from the purest motives they might justly apprehend, that the work itself would suffer by such intrusion.

But, I may not enter farther into these injudicious quarrels, suffice it only to observe, that their effects were fatal to the missionary work. The disputes among the missionaries affected their converts, and everywhere produced contentions. The jealousy of the governments was roused. A dreadful persecution arose in Japan. The teachers, as well as the disciples, fell victims to the fury and suspicion of that savage people; and the name of Christian there is no more had in remembrance but to abhor it (1615).

In China, a flourishing era gave brighter hopes of perpetuity, but they too were blighted. The same effects produced the same calamities; and, though the present century left the Jesuits possessed of a noble church at Peking, within the imperial precincts, and their missionaries spread through all that country, and the Mongol Tartary, the next saw them utterly expelled the empire, with great carnage, and sunk never to rise up again.

This jealousy of the Jesuits, and the final prevalence of their enemies, leading at last to the suppression of their order in the next century, has proved eventually the most fatal blow to the authority of Rome, and led almost to the extinction of all missionary labours among the Papists; an event which every Protestant will rather consider as a precious than afflictive.

In Africa, where the Portuguese power prevailed, the Capuchins were chiefly em-

ployed, less artful and able indeed than the disciples of Loyola, but equally zealous. They relate the wonders wrought by their ministry at Benin, Soffala, and the west and southern coasts of Africa: but those who have seen these negro christians, the catholics themselves being judges, will with difficulty admit them to a place in the church of Christ. Though they have been baptised, and learned to make the sign of the cross, in all the essentials of christianity, whether of doctrine or practice, they differ little from their countrymen. It is among the awful scenes, viewed with anguish by every real christian, that so immense a region of the globe should be left to this day sunk in Pagan and Mahomedan darkness, and lying in the shadow of death, and no effort made to pluck the brands from the burning.

Not much more can be said for all the catholic conversions made from Mexico to the Straits of Magellan. There Spaniards and Portuguese are alike buried in ignorance, superstition, and profligacy, even below their bigotted countrymen in Europe. With such examples and such instructors, the state of the poor natives may well be imagined: immersed in their ancient superstitions, they have added all the ceremonies and follies of their new religion, to the absurdities of the old.

Yet let it be remembered, that however Jesuits or Capuchins may be despised or condemned by protestants, their conduct is to us highly reproachful. That we who vaunt a purer christianity, and have so many hobler motives to animate our zeal, have been hitherto so backward in the work of heathen missions, so indifferent about enlarging the borders of Immanuel's kingdom, and so cold in our love towards the souls purchased by his most precious blood, must be confessed our guilt and shame, and can neither be too deeply lamented, or too soon amended.

Among the protestants, it must be owned, the efforts to spread the gospel in the heathen world were few and feeble. A zealous Lutheran, Ernest, Baron of Wells, felt for the honour of his profession, and for the glory of the Lord, and sought to form a society for a protestant mission; but a variety of impediments disappointed his purposes, and no effectual benefit resulted from the attempt.

The two great nations of English and Dutch were too much engrossed with their commercial concerns to take religion into their view, and utterly neglected this great object. Such a scheme, indeed, was formed under Charles I. and a society appointed under the sanction of parliament for this purpose (1647); but the confusions which followed, prevented any considerable efforts being made during the civil wars. And zealous as Cromwell professed himself for

christianity, he was too much taken up in securing his precarious dominion at home, to extend his concern to the heathen abroad. At the restoration of Charles the Second, the society was re-established, but the temper of that reign was little missionary—the project languished in lukewarmness. All that can be called missionary labour at that time, must be ascribed to the Puritans and Non-conformists, who fled to America to escape the persecutions of government at home. Some of these men of God distinguished their zeal in labours among the poor Indians, which were crowned with tokens of divine favour. The names of Brainerd, Mayhew, and Shephard (1633), deserve to be had in remembrance: and, above all, the excellent Elliot, called the Apostle of the Indians, a title merited by his indefatigable labours, and signal success among them; and more especially by his translation of the scriptures into their language, and thus enabling them to read and understand the oracles of God. These attempts in America roused the attention of many at home; and another society, noble in its institution, was formed for promoting christian knowledge. I wish I could report the mighty effects, and the zealous labours of the missionaries sent forth under their auspices. Some good, however, has been done in India, and elsewhere, and particularly in the immense number of bibles and religious tracts, which have been dispersed through all parts of the British dominions; and never can the word of God be perused without being the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.

I would mention the efforts of the Dutch, if I could trace the brightness of the gospel glory rising under their patronage. The independents from Leyden, indeed, emigrated to the Dutch colony in North America, and were among the first harbingers of gospel day; and in all their settlements the reformed religion was set up; though I find no record of considerable success in the conversion of the heathen. In Ceylon, indeed, and on the coast of Malabar, some traces of missionary labours remain. I may not conceal, that in Japan, it is said, they hold the only spot which Europeans are permitted to enter, and that purchased for commercial purposes, by denying that they are christians, and trampling on the cross: but I shall not, for the honour of the Batavian nation, easily adopt so infamous a report. It is to be lamented, that vast as their commerce, and extensive as their foreign settlements have been, no vigorous missionary efforts have yet been made, to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the countries which Providence placed under their yoke, or brought into connection with them: but my business is to record what hath been done, rather than to blame what hath been neglected.

The amazing progress in all scientific attainments, peculiarly marks this age: never perhaps before was such a constellation of sages seen upon this stage of earth, who carried philosophy to its highest pitch. From the great Bacon, Lord Verulam, who led the way at the commencement of this æra, to the greater Sir Isaac Newton, supposed justly to be the first of human beings for intellect, discoveries, and extent of knowledge. England claims, and justly, the first place in the temple of literary fame. But other nations boast also their productions: Italy her Galileo, France her Gassendi and Descartes, Germany her Leibnitz, and Denmark her Tycho Brahe, with a thousand other names of eminence, who eclipsed all those who had preceded them in mathematics, astronomy and natural philosophy; and, indeed, in most other branches of knowledge, physic, chymistry, history, physiology, and every kind of literature, sacred or profane. In every nation the language became more polished, and the writers as elegant in their expressions, as deep in their researches. But these I must pass hastily over, as the more immediate subject of the Church of Christ will furnish abundant matter.

Yet it must not be forgotten, that amidst this vast accession to the stock of human knowledge, many reputed geniuses arose, whose fame (or shall I rather say infamy) was built upon the most daring attacks on revelation, or the most insidious attempts to undermine it. To philosophize above what is written, and for vain man to affect to be wiser than God, is too correspondent with his fallen nature, ready to abuse the noblest faculties to the most perverse purposes. Of these, whilst France furnished her Vanini, and Holland the Jew Spinoza, England exhibited, with a general profligacy of manners, under Charles II. some of the most impious writers and the most infidel; who took abundant pains to disseminate their deistical and atheistical tenets, and to embolden in his wickedness, the fool who had said (or at least hoped) in his heart, that there is no God. Such were Hobbes, Toland, and the Lords Herbert, Rochester, and Shaftesbury, who endeavoured, partly by reasoning, partly by ridicule, to overturn the faith of the unstable professor, or to harden the hearts of the profligate. Many, indeed, instantly arose to lift up the shield against the fiery darts of the wicked: and that great and able Robert Boyle, who is said to have always read the scripture on his knees, zealous for divine truth, as eminent in philosophical discoveries, instituted a constant annual course of lectures, in defence of that religion, which these sceptical philosophers endeavoured to supplant and destroy. Let it be however particularly noted, that the great luminaries of the age, were the strenuous

defenders of divine revelation. Newton, Locke, Boyle, Maclaurin, and others, alike distinguished for science, gloried in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Not that the faith of the gospel stands in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

The general state of the church will be seen, as we pass in review the several members of which it was composed; the Papists, the Greeks, and the Protestants: the latter of which will more especially engage our attention, as in the others little else will be found than darkness, and the shadow of death.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE CHURCH OF ROME.

THE indignant pontiffs beheld the loss of their flocks, and the defalcation of their revenues; and deep in their hearts meditated the means of their recovery, and of vengeance on their enemies. The peace of Augsburg had bound up the arm of violence from persecution, and every where proclaimed peace and tolerance among the contending princes. But peace was torment to the Romish prelates, and tolerance, of all imaginable evils, the most intolerable, and treason against the majesty of those anathemas, which they had hurled against all heretics. The first object therefore of Rome, and of those who filled the papal chair, was to break this bond of union: to rouse the Catholic princes to fresh acts of oppression in their own dominions, and to renewed attempts, to bring back to the house of their prison, those who had emancipated themselves from the yoke of bondage.

This was the uniform pursuit and spirit of all the successive pontiffs; and they employed the most powerful engines of craft and cruelty to effect their purposes. The history of one will be nearly the history of all; though some were men of a more learned cast; others more daringly flagitious and profligate in their manners; and here and there a gentle spirit, covered with an honest blush, that confessed guilt; and heaved a suppressed sigh for reformation, which the state of popery was too inveterately rooted in evil to admit. I shall not therefore particularize, but pursue the steps which marked the designs of the pontifical chair, leaving those who have done justice to them severally, to brand with infamy the impurities, and open profligacy of Innocent the Tenth, the most criminal of men; and to adorn the memory of the ingenuous Odescalchi, Innocent XI. who sought in vain to cleanse the Augean stable.

As the object was to recover their lost

power, wealth and dominion, the means they possessed unfortunately were but too well suited to the end. The House of Austria with the other Catholic princes, the devoted partizans of the holy see, were especially courted. To these they looked for an arm of flesh and persecution; and endeavoured to rouse them to recover their past influence, by breaking the peace of Augsburg, and bruising under the rod of oppression those, whom they had bound themselves to protect and tolerate.

Another, and yet more powerful engine, was found in the wily, insinuating, restless, and indefatigable order of Jesuits; the firmest supporters of the holy see, and its most zealous as well as able satellites. These were dispersed through all lands, and seized every opportunity to pervert the ignorant, or oppress the feeble. In the courts of princes, whose confessors they chiefly were, the laxity of their moral system recommended their prescriptions for quieting guilty consciences; and one commutation was always sure to be suggested, as covering a multitude of sins; and this as easy to perform, as flattering to human pride and superstition. Zeal for the conversion of heretics, and the employment of any means to effect it, however savage or contrary to the most solemn engagements, cancelled all crimes.

The pens of these artful and perfidious casuists were first employed to prove the nullity of the peace of Augsburg, and to charge upon the protestants, various pretended infractions; in order to justify the attack meditated against them.

The House of Austria, gained by the popes and these jesuitical directors of their consciences, began with the violation of the treaty, in their own hereditary dominions. They endeavoured to prevail upon the protestants to return to the Romish pale, by caresses, promises, the wiles of controversy, and the ingenuity of fraud; in all which, these new apostles were employed with much success. To bend the stubborn, and to subdue the daring, innumerable acts of oppression were exercised: and where the law was suborned to colloque with power, redress was sought in vain. The protestants had no choice, but to submit, or fly their country.

Bohemia next experienced the arm of popish tyranny. Despair drove the Bohemians to resistance, and to wreak on their persecutors vengeance for the wrongs they had received. And here humanity bleeds, and christianity groans, over the miseries inseparable from civil war. On the death of the Emperor Matthias (1619), the Bohemians resolved to choose a king of their own faith, and to preserve their civil and religious liberties against the all-grasping arm of Austria. For this purpose they offered their crown to

the illustrious elector palatine, a protestant, and son-in-law to the King of England; hoping to strengthen themselves greatly by such an election. In an unfortunate hour Frederic accepted the crown, and prepared to defend himself, and his new subjects, against the claims and arms of Ferdinand of Austria. The issue of the conflict was the most afflictive. Frederic not only lost his crown and kingdom, but his own electorate. The imperial arms triumphed: and what rendered this more grievous, it was in a great measure owing to the baseness of John, elector of Saxony, who helped on the destruction of Frederic and his brethren: whether moved by envy at his elevation, or by prejudice against him as a calvinist. The ruin of the poor protestants followed in Bohemia, and the palatinate; and they groaned under every oppression that abused power could inflict, and religious bigotry suggest: meanwhile our wretched and pusillanimous James I. looked on, nor moved a finger to support his worthy son, or the sinking cause of the reformed religion.

Tilly, the imperial general, now reigned without opponent, and Rome began again to number Germany among the countries of her obedience. The protestants, unable to make head against their conquerors, maintained a precarious tenure in their own dominions; and every day proclaimed the approaching despotic power of the emperor, and the subjugation of the Lutherans, and of all who had deserted the popish pale. Rome exulted in her prospects, and the Jesuits redoubled their efforts in the conquered countries, to seduce the vanquished, to make their peace with the conquerors, by a change of their religion.

The emperor, boundless in his ambition, as enlaved to popery, now cast off the mask; and in direct breach of the peace of Augsburg, instigated by the jesuitical emissaries of Rome, issued an edict for the restoration of all that had been taken from the Church (1629), in virtue of the former treaty. Whatever priests and monks chose to claim, the imperial soldiers were at hand to seize; and resistance was vain, where tyranny perverted the law against the protestant professor. The cries of the oppressed were loud. The wise and considerate of the papists themselves supported the complaints which reached the imperial throne, and remonstrated, that the inevitable consequence would be to rouse the Bohemians by despair to resistance, and to leave the country ravaged, ruined, and destitute of inhabitants. But the savage bigot Ferdinand replied, *maius regnum vastatum quam damnatum.*—"I had rather see the kingdom a desert, than damned." Terror and dismay spread over the remaining princes. The protestant cause was reduced to the lowest ebb; its final o-

verthrow in the empire seemed inevitable and approaching. But God in wrath remembered mercy; and though he thus punished their declensions, he would not wholly give them over for a prey to the teeth of their enemies.

(1630.) The magnanimous King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, heard the groans of his brethren with anguish. He saw the courage of the few remaining Lutheran princes quelled by fear; or their arms palsied by mean attention to their own interest, and base hope of profiting by the spoils of others; though like the companions of Ulysses, Saxony the chief could only expect to be last devoured. He resolved to rescue them from oppression or perish in the attempt. The court of France, jealous of the emperor's overgrown power, instigated Gustavus to the enterprise, and promised him assistance. He knew he should find also friends among the timid, when they dared to declare themselves, and were sure that help was at hand. He boldly therefore drew the sword, and with a small but chosen army, crossed the sea, and landed in Germany to maintain the liberty of his brethren, and check the encroachments of Austria and Rome. The issue is well known.—Victory crowned the hero. The insolent pride of Ferdinand was humbled; his generals defeated. And though the King of Sweden fell at Lutzen, at the head of his chosen band, on the bosom of victory, his death arrested not the vigour of the Swedes. The generals who succeeded Gustavus, maintained their superiority; till worn out with a war of thirty years of misery, all parties became disposed to heal the wounds which bled throughout this unhappy country, by the peace of Westphalia (1645). In vain the pope and the Jesuits endeavoured to put every obstacle in the way of its conclusion. Necessity obliged both parties to compromise their differences. The emperor indeed refused to grant their former liberty to the protestants in Austria and Bohemia, or to restore the palatinate; yet all the other claims of the protestants were solemnly admitted and guaranteed. The restitution edict was revoked; and the protestant and reformed interests settled on a basis not easily to be shaken.

The dragon gashed with vexation at seeing his prey thus escape; and set himself to provide new means, and to plot new wiles, for the seduction of those, whom he found himself unable to subdue. Nor were these without considerable effect. An open violence was restrained, the Jesuits and crafty prelates endeavoured, under pretence of reconciling, to soften down the grosser features of popery, and to give them a more inoffensive aspect. They professed a willingness to grant almost any indulgences, to the scrupulous, only that they should return to the bosom of the Romish church, and heal the schisms; for this end conferences were held, disputations on the points of controversy managed with greater mildness and docility; every winning artifice was employed, and every tempting offer made, which could either surprise the conscience of the doubtful and ill-informed, or tempt the worldly-minded.

But these arts, through the watchfulness of the protestants, were in a measure disappointed. The Germans chose to preserve their own liberty and religious profession. Yet a Christina, Queen of Sweden, was perverted, quitted her country and died at Rome: a woman of no semblance of religion. A Marquis of Badenbaur; a Count Palatine; a Duke of Brunswick; and a King of Poland, who procured a crown by his apostacy; these, with several men of learning and name, also joined the popish communion. Indeed the zeal for making converts among the Romanists, met with little of equal activity among the protestants. The fire of the reformation was damped; a spirit of formality and security grew upon them; and the number of those whose hearts were delivered from the dominion of the leading errors of popery was not so great, as the general profession seemed to signify. An unawakened conscience, and the bias to lean on our own wisdom and doings for salvation, left many, and of the wise and learned also, an easy prey to seduction. A richer spouse also tempted them; for all the great preferments were in the apostate church. The hopes of Rome thus continued to be supported, and their secret practices in all nations attended with considerable success. Where they could influence the ruling powers, the subjects found no agreements or treaties binding. Hence in Poland the protestants, under a variety of pretences, were robbed and plundered, ejected from their churches, deprived of their schools, and cruelly punished, in order to engage them to renounce their faith and profession, in contradiction to all justice, and without hope of redress. The same scene was acted in Hungary, under the hereditary bigotry of the House of Austria (1671). The dukes of Savoy and Piedmont were instigated to hunt out the poor remains of the Waldenses from the fastnesses of the mountains, where they had sought a hiding-place, and with all the inhumanity of inquisitorial cruelty, to waste by fire and sword the feeble, but patient and unresisting remains of this faithful people (1639—1685.)

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Millions of the Moors, faithful to their prophet, sacrificed all their substance, relatives, and native land, and were transported into Africa; carrying their diligence and arts to enrich the soil of Fez and Morocco; and leaving a desert behind them yet unpeopled. But the church gained whatever might be the losses of the state; and procured acquisitions in the evacuated kingdoms, which well repaid the zeal of the inquisitors.

In France a constant infringement of the protestant liberties, reduced the numbers, and awakened the complainings of the oppressed. Every art was used to stimulate the ruling powers to persecution; and every wile of cunning to surprise the consciences of the monarchs, surrounded by Jesuits, confessors, priests and bishops, all in league to bring back the Huguenots to the house of their prison. After being long harassed by persecution, the revocation of the edict of Nantz (1684), compelled many hundreds of thousands of French protestants to seek refuge in foreign lands. Ah! the day of recompense is come. God is visiting upon the children the iniquity of their fathers, and giving them blood to drink, for the innocent protestant blood poured out on every side.

Nor were the artifices of popery confined to the nations under her own obedience. England was always an enviable object; so long a sief of Rome, and patiently plundered, now cut off root and branch from all connection or communication with the holy see. No faith was to be kept with such heretics; and killing them esteemed no murder, but meritorious. Such were the maxims of popery; such Garnet, the Jesuit superior in England taught; and surprised the conscientious papists, Sir Everard Digby, and others, into a plot, the most horrible in its nature, and which threatened to be the most dreadful in its effects (1605); no less than to blow up the king and both houses of parliament with gunpowder; and in the confusion of the nation, which must ensue, to set up the Roman catholic religion. The blood runs cold when we review this scene of deliberate and atrocious wickedness, sanctioned by Rome, and sure to merit the highest degree of glory in that antichristian church. Just at the moment of its execution, a gracious Providence discovered the infernal design, and exposed the diabolical conspirators to the righteous laws of their country.

Disappointed, but not discouraged, the pontiffs and Jesuits pursued their object with more caution, and deeper laid schemes; and sometimes with a prospect of success, that filled the ambitious prelate with premature exultation; though mercifully ending in disappointment. What could not be ef-

fectcd under James I. was attempted under his successor, Charles I. He had taken a bigotted papist for his Queen (1625); and with her a legion of Jesuits followed. He had promoted the violent Laud, half a papist, to the see of Canterbury, who seconded all his tyrannical designs. Mosheim indeed is utterly mistaken in asserting that they caused "the Church of England to be remoulded, and publicly renounced the Calvinistic opinions;" for the articles, liturgy and homilies continued in full force as ever; yet that they wished and attempted it is too true. Laud was a bitter Arminian, strongly suspected of leaning to popery, and constantly endeavouring to enlarge the ritual, and bring it to a greater conformity with Rome; whilst his encouragement, seconded by the royal patronage, of all who opposed the established doctrines; and his cruelty and oppression of those who held them, whom he charged with Puritanism, because they zealously counteracted his designs, kept the best men out of the church, or silenced those who were in it; and encouraged the apostates to greater diligence by the assured prospect of preferment. Forbes, one of them, who well knew the objects then pursued, has given every reason to conclude, that both Charles I. and his archbishops, would have been well content to come to terms, and be reconciled with Rome. This fatal event was prevented, by one little less to be deplored, the civil wars which broke out, and brought these unhappy innovators to that fearful end, which many who most abhorred their popish and tyrannical designs most deeply condemned. When once the torch of discord had lighted up the flames of war, the politic Cromwell and his associates led on the conflagration; and the head, which wore the crown, fell the victim to his own bigotry and duplicity, and the ill-directed councils of Laud and his popish advisers.

Thus for a while the wicked, but exalted protector, waved the bloody sword, not only over his own land, but made the monarchs of christendom tremble, court his friendship, and suspend their persecutions against the protestants. Even the tiara itself was obliged to bow down; which he sometimes threatened to pluck from the head of the unworthy wearer; and his menaces were known to be no *bruta fulmina*; but terribly realized against his enemies. Whatever judgment may be formed of his character by others, the reflecting christian will probably think, as I do, that tyrannical as Cromwell was, we are as much indebted, under a gracious over-ruling Providence, to this man for the preservation, as to the bloody Henry the Eighth, for the introduction of the protestant religion amongst us. The good hand of our God over us for good is not the least

to be acknowledged, because the instruments employed meant not so, but acted under the impulse of their own pride, ambition, and selfishness.

(1660.) The restoration of Charles the Second once more revived the most sanguine hopes of Rome. He was a man of the most profligate character and corrupted principles; and as popery to such a one was the most convenient religion, he had, during his exile, embraced it, and become the pupil of the Jesuits. But as the utmost secrecy was needful, in order to procure his return, he made the most specious and solemn professions of zeal for the protestant faith and the church of England: and was obliged to veil his designs at first, under the cloak of the profoundest hypocrisy. When he had by this means recovered the throne of his ancestors, the love of ease and the love of pleasure, palsied his secret desires for the restoration of the religion he had embraced; and which only could be established in a nation who abhorred it, by a contention that might have again sent him into the banishment from which their voice had recalled him. Not that his purpose was altered, or his plans laid aside. His treaty with the King of France, through the secret negotiation of the Lord Arundel of Wardour (1670), a zealous papist, had the restoration of popery for its grand object. And though he was withheld, by political circumstances, from introducing the promised supplies of men, he received the unkingly subsidy of two hundred thousand pounds yearly, to betray his country to its enemies; and wept, says Mr. Hume, *for joy*, during an interview with his sister, the Dutchess of Orleans, at the hope of quickly realizing the project of bringing back his kingdom within the Romish pale of obedience. But his indolence, his cowardice, and the pursuit of his scandalous amours, occupied his time and thoughts, and diverted him from venturing upon any steps of danger and difficulty. Death surprised him in the midst of his pleasures, and the profession of protestantism, with his bishops around him. A popish priest was hastily sent for, up the back stairs; and the rest all excluded, whilst he made his last peace with Rome, and received the delusive viaticum. Thus died as he lived, that wicked, gentlemanlike, lawd, deceitful, popish hypocrite, Charles the Second.

(1685.) The church of Rome had a more faithful and zealous son in his successor James II. Open in his profession, and more violent, even than his Jesuit confessors themselves, he no sooner succeeded to the throne, than he unveiled, with unjesuitical imprudence, his intentions; and thus defeated his own designs. Too sincere to dare be a hypocrite, and too confident of his

own power to carry his purposes into execution, he wantonly trampled on the laws of the land; affronted the church, by all the trumpery of the mass restored in his chapel; and the nation, by acts of despotism it was little disposed to endure. His craftier associates would have checked the rapidity of his movements, and the pontiff himself wished to rein in the impetuous monarch; but the merit, and the glory, after which he aspired, of saving the nation, over which he presided, from hell and heresy, drove him on furiously to his own destruction. The generous William of Holland, who had married his daughter, the next protestant heir-ess to the throne, obeyed the call of the people, and hastened to their deliverance. James, deceived by courtier bows and professions, flattered himself with the fidelity of his army and navy (1688); but, no sooner was the protestant deliverer landed, than every man, even his dearest friends and his own daughter, deserted the bigot King, and left him as destitute of all help, as before he had appeared despotic and servilely obeyed. Thus once more the prey was taken from the mighty; and, in the critical moment, when the waster was ready to destroy, a gracious interposition of Providence preserved the purity of religion, and the liberties of the land. Rome, gnashed with disappointed rage and malice, sought to arm her avengers to restore the abdicated monarch; and allured with the hope of ambitious conquests, the rival governments of France and Spain, to second her own deep-laid schemes of subjection, but in vain. William, firm in the affections of his people, lifted up the banner of victory; and in Ireland and England, humbled all his enemies, and laid the foundations of a constitution, which, with Father Paul, every good Englishman prays, *esto perpetua*.

The arms of Rome were now again reduced to subterfuge, wile, and cunning. The Jesuits unabashed, and rising, Antæus like, from their defeats, marshalled anew their forces. In France there arose a host of Polemics, who were called Methodists, from the artful methods which they took to confound, seduce, and pervert the protestants from their religious principles. Veron, the Jesuit, and others, with the eminent Cardinal Richelieu at their head, endeavoured to establish the authority and unity of the church, as a divine constitution, where the danger of schism, and the prescription of antiquity formed the plausible arguments of sophistry. The contempt into which popery now sunk, and the extinction of its most crafty supporters, makes it superfluous to reply to arguments long since confuted, and follies now become obsolete; and of which the remaining satellites of Rome are themselves ashamed. But in that day, much

mischiefs arose from them; and between the seductions produced by interest, fear, ignorance, or surprise, many departed from the profession of faith, and reconciled themselves to the false church. Yet, on the whole, the progress of knowledge weakened the pillars of superstition, and in every state the increase of infidelity was still more evident than of popery: and the mines were prepared of that philosophical impiety, which our days have seen bursting into explosion, and overturning all the strongholds of catholicism.

The promising appearances also of the spread of Romanism in many foreign lands, at the beginning of the century, declined towards the end of it, and all their laurels of conversion were blasted in Asia, and Africa. Partly by the intrigues discovered in Japan, which awakened that ferocious government against the Jesuits; partly by the insolence with which they carried on their pretensions, as in Abyssinia (1694), and which ended in their expulsion: by these calamities, whether true christianity gained or lost, is a very disputable matter.

A quarrel with the Venetians had nearly separated that country from the Romish jurisdiction. The mediation of Henry IV. King of France, prevented a fatal rupture; but the bands of allegiance were so loosened, and the peace restored on such terms, as securing the pontiff's honour, left him only nominal power in religious matters; whilst the state maintained her national authority and independence. The famous Father Paul, the candid author of the council of Trent, gained himself, in this controversy, immortal honour, by defending the liberties of his country against the usurpations of Rome: and, as Cardinal Norris owns, ever since the papal bulls pass with difficulty the Po into the Venetian territories (1607).

(1641.) Portugal threatened a still greater defection, but restrained by the chains of prejudice, they dared not as hardly reject the servitude of Rome, as they had boldly recovered their country from the usurpation of Spain. During all the long years which this conflict continued between the rival nations (1640), the see of Rome, overawed by the Spanish terrors, refused to grant any bull for the consecration of Portuguese bishops, and left that kingdom deprived of such spiritual succours as her pontiffs could afford. Yet, the hero who defended his independence with success against the Spanish monarch, dared not break with the Roman prelate. Inquisitorial power, and national prejudices, compelled him to temporize, till the peace with Spain permitted the Pope to issue the necessary dispensations: and thus has Portugal continued the most abject vassal of the Romish see to this day (1666).

The sturdy opposition of the French bi-

shops to the papal encroachments on their privileges and immunities, fortified by the jealous pride of her mighty monarch against all foreign claims, had, from the beginning, preserved the Gallican church, from the servile subjection to which the other catholic kingdoms had been reduced. This was a perpetual subject of contention. The faithful legions of Jesuits maintained the legitimacy of every papal claim. The parliament of Paris, and the native ecclesiastics, defended their liberties, and excited often the papal indignation: but the popes withheld wisely their anathemas, which had lost so much of their terrors, and confined themselves to remonstrances. Indeed, humiliating instances appear of pontifical imbecility, and Gallic monarchical power. The punishment for an insult committed on a French ambassador (1664), was rigorous and truly mortifying to papal pride; but the disputes about the rights of presenting to benefices, during the vacancy of the Gallican bishopricks (1678), shewed that the spiritual claims of the pope would be as little respected as his temporal dignity. Bulls upon bulls on one side, and severe edicts on the other, against those who dared to pay them the least respect or obedience, threatened a breach not easily repaired. The Gallican bishops supported their monarch, and in a solemn assembly decreed, that all the churches of France were subject to the kings *regale*, or right of nomination, during the vacancy of every see: but they added decisions still more mortifying, and derogatory to papal authority (1682).

1. Excluding Rome from all interference in the temporal concerns of sovereigns, and restraining her authority to spirituals only.

2. Confirming the decrees of the council of Constance, subjecting the pope, as well as all others, to a general council.

3. Maintaining all ancient usages and immunities of the Gallican church inviolable.

4. Denying the infallibility of the papal decisions, unless sanctioned by a general council: these the clergy and universities throughout the kingdom adopted. Nor could the terrors of excommunication, or the inflexibility of the pontiff, alter their determinations; and though some soothing letters were written to appease his wrath, these decisions continued the rule of the Gallican church.

(1687.) A claim, much more unreasonable, of a right of asylum for criminals, to a great extent at Rome, under the French ambassador's protection, spoke the proud haughtiness of the prince, and the degraded dominion to the prelate, even in his own capital: For nothing could be more unjust, or tend more grievously to the interruption of the peace and good government of the city, than such impunity. The King of France would be obeyed; and he only yielded as a favour,

what he claimed as a right. But in the matter of the *regale*, the king carried his point, saving the honour of the holy see, by some slight modifications. The struggle, however, between the rivals for power, ceased not; each, though more covertly, carried on their schemes of offence and defence. Sometimes jesuitical influence won the monarchs to side with the holy see; but they jealously watched against every thing which might diminish their own authority, though they now and then sacrificed their ecclesiastics, and their immunities. Indeed, the boasted liberties of the Gallican church, were confined to these. Pope, king, bishops, parliaments, and universities, equally set themselves against every thing that deserves the name of liberty in the Church, and always beat down every effort of this sort, with a rod of iron. At last the triumphs of liberty are heard, and that sacred name abused, to cover every act of cruelty and licentiousness. Church and state have sunk in the promiscuous ruin. That neither, such as they were before, may ever spring from the ashes of the conflagration, is the devout wish of every true friend to religion and freedom.

Attempts were made, and with some success, to reform the monastic orders, become woefully corrupt. But it is now hardly a subject worth consideration, however important at that day. The Benedictines bore the palm; and the separation of monks into orders, reformed and unreformed, speaks pretty strongly the state of these societies. The time is past—they will probably soon be consigned to oblivion, and their names only preserved to demonstrate more strikingly the folly of mankind. The most rigid of La Trappe are said to have owed their establishment to a singular incident. Their founder, De Rance, was enamoured of a lady (1664), with whom he had lived in a state very unclerical. After a short absence, returning, he passed to her chamber by a back door, which he had commonly used. There a dreadful scene presented itself: the dear object of his affections had fallen the victim of the small-pox; and, in all the disfigurement of that horrible disease, was laid out a corpse; the room illuminated, and hung with black. He stood motionless, gazing in stupid horror on the face he had adored; and hasting to the most gloomy and desolate region of France, buried himself in the monastery, which long attracted so much attention and respect for its austerities: but now happily evacuated, can hardly be employed to a worse purpose than it was before.

Towering supereminent above the rest, the Jesuits rose to the summit of power and influence; envied, feared, and hated by all their monkish brethren; and in a system of consummate policy and perseverance, defeat-

ing all the attacks made on them; and looking down upon their impotent, though envenomed assailants. Among these, the Jansenists were the foremost, and most formidable, and brought upon themselves in consequence, the wrath of the partial pontiffs, whose tiara itself was compelled to bend to the majesty of jesuitical influence. Had any man dared suggest their fall and extinction at that day, with what contempt would his predictions have been treated?

The state of learning in popish countries was certainly highly improved; and though the famous Galileo was cast into prison by the inquisition, for adopting the system of Copernicus; this did not prevent the other literati from investigating the discoveries he had made; and the court of Rome itself, however terrified with the introduction of novelties in philosophy, as in religion, was compelled at last to admit the possibility, that might be true, which demonstration had proved could not be false. So the earth was quietly permitted to revolve round the sun, as the centre of our planetary system, without any farther anathema.

But, high as the attainments of the learned rose, the state of morals sunk very low. The dignitaries of the church were the creatures of courts; and, as they gained their preferments by the servile arts of flattery, and interest in great men's favour, so they used their emoluments accordingly, in a life of indolence, pleasure, and magnificence. The care of souls was a consideration which entered not into their views. The inferior clergy, in their gradations, followed the same steps, and procured patrons by the same means. It must not be denied, that some happy exceptions were found to the general depravity; but they were treated with contempt and enmity, and sure to bring down upon themselves the envy and resentment of their brethren, for pretending to be righteous over much, and carrying things too far; not without insinuations of their hypocrisy, and spiritual pride; which the others, as more honest, disdained.

Among those pre-eminent as authors and theologians, who wished to improve the heart by their writings, and the world by their example, we may justly reckon the seminary of Port Royal: from which issued the works of Pascal, Arnaud, Nicole, the fathers of the Jansenists, and by whom, chiefly, all that can be called spiritual religion in France, was preserved, unless we except the mystics, with the excellent Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambray, and others, (1697), who displayed in their conversation and conduct the amiable spirit of divine charity; and, like Enoch, walked with God, amidst all the errors of the false religion which was professed around them. God had, no doubt, still within the Romish pale,

a people to the eternal praise of the glory of his grace; but they were few, and in general of no reputation; and sure to be the objects of reproach, in proportion to the purity of their lives, and the spirituality of their tempers. Wherever, instead of form and ceremonies, men sought communion with God, and made his word the rule of their conversation, they brought upon themselves animadversion, according to the different dispositions of the governments under which they lived.

I may not stay to expose the corruption of doctrine and morals, in which the Jesuits bore the palm, sure to be defended, or screened by the holy see, because the whole purport of their perversions led to the exaltation of the pontiff, and the establishment of the pillars of his throne. Hence, all the complaints, remonstrances, and detections, made by their adversaries, produced no effect at Rome. They had usually sufficient credit to procure their own vindication, and the condemnation of their opposers; and, even in the great contest with the Dominicans, though so many of the fathers, with Augustin, were against them, on the subject of predestination and grace, after a dispute carried on for years, under successive popes, they contrived to ward off the decision against their mighty Molinoes (1605); and the pontiff compelled the combatants to make a drawn battle, least, deciding for the Dominicans against the Jesuits, he should give the protestants occasion of triumph, and strengthen their cause. Policy, not truth, dictated every measure of the Roman see.

(1640.) But the pontiffs testified greater partiality to their jesuitical friends, in the cause of the Jansenists, on the very same subject, which Jansenius, the learned bishop of Ypres, supported ably, in a book entitled *Augustinus*; being an exact and faithful epitome of the doctrine which St. Augustin taught, and the church had so often sanctioned. This book made a very great noise within the Roman pale; and being the very opposite to the doctrine which the Jesuits taught, they bent their whole force to procure its condemnation, and succeeded (1653).

The papal bulls, which issued on this occasion, produced in France the most violent controversies on the subject: but the conflicts, then of importance, between Jesuits and Jansenists, have long since ceased to be such. Suffice it to observe, that the worst side carried their point, and armed the magistracy to suppress those whom the pope condemned. The persecuting church always bears the brand of antichrist; the persecuted have presumptive evidence in their favour, that they follow at least the dictates of conscience.

In search of the true church therefore, and of those who have any pretensions to be ranked among the living members of the body mystical, I am compelled to prefer such as the papal bulls condemned. Instead of the long ridiculous list of the canonized saints, added by the pontiffs, this century, to the Roman calendar, which I must leave to oblivion, saints unknown in earth and heaven, I turn to seek those within the Roman pale, who appear to have escaped the corruptions of the world, and not to have known the depths of Satan; however tinged by superstition, or enslaved by church prejudices. Among the millions of clergy and laity in this idolatrous church, debased by superstition, sunk in ignorance, or tied and bound with the chains of their sins, some probably were found, who, seduced by the dread of schism, and the fear of papal excommunication, continued in the observance of the outward forms, without placing religion in these things; and believing to the saving of their souls, truly feared God, and wrought righteousness.

Among the Jansenists, a considerable band appears of faithful confessors, whose works are still read with admiration, and whose real piety deserves to be imitated. I do not readily receive the accusations, that papists or protestants have objected to them, as over rigorous and fanatic in their devotion: but I will admit many things might be blameable; a tincture of popery might drive them to push monkish austerities too far; and secretly to place some merit in mortification, which, they in general disclaimed: yet, with all that can be said, surely the root of the matter was in them. When I read Jansenius, or his disciples, Pascal or Quennell, I bow before such distinguished excellence, and confess them my brethren, shall I say, or my fathers. Their principles are pure and evangelical; their morals formed upon the apostles and prophets; and their zeal to amend and convert, blessed with eminent success. I will pity the wanderings of a St. Cyran, and allow for the prejudices of education; but I will ever love and honour those who appear to have loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and dared to suffer for his sake: I believe the Lord of life will honour them, at the day of his appearing and glory.

Among those called Mystics also, I am persuaded some were found, who loved God out of a pure heart fervently; and though they were ridiculed and reviled, for proposing a disinterestedness of love without other motives, and as professing to feel in the enjoyment of the temper itself, an abundant reward, their holy and heavenly conversation will carry a stamp of real religion upon it, when all their jesuitical opponents, with the time-serving Bossuet at their head, will be

weighed and found wanting. If I pity any thing in Fenelon, it is his submissive publication of the papal bull, which condemned him; conscious to his dying day, that no one of his sentiments were altered. Some will call this weakness, some hypocrisy; but I can suppose a purer reason, his desire of peace, and his dread, least opposition should occasion divisions, which ultimately might produce more evil than good. I will not vindicate the motive or the reasoning; but to such a man as Fenelon, though I blame his conduct, I shall give full credit, that he acted as he thought right in the sight of God. It is pleasant to behold, amidst the darkness of popery such luminaries; and no doubt to this their disputes with the protestants had greatly contributed. Even those who pertinaciously still adhered to the church of Rome, were indebted to their adversaries for a portion of the truth and godliness, which they were led to embrace and follow.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE GREEK CHURCH.

SUNK to the lowest state of debasement under the Turks, degraded in character, disfigured by superstition, grovelling in ignorance, and pining in poverty, little can be hoped from such a communion. Yet, were efforts made repeatedly to win them over to the subjection of Rome in vain. The appearances of success always vanished, the prejudices of education prevailed, and attachment to their own forms and ceremonies kept them separate. Even were their submission obtained, it seems but a miserable acquisition. Rome, however, continually maintained a host of her missionaries in the East, endeavouring among all the oriental Christians to gain proselytes; and now and then new bishops were dispatched with a pompous name, to preside over congregations, whose numbers were so few, and poverty so great, that they seemed scarce worth the expense necessary to keep up the appearance.

The alms distributed were the most instrumental means of the conversions, which seldom endured longer than the continuance of them: and it is singular enough, that the Greek students, who have been brought to Rome for education, and initiated in all the mysteries of popery, are said, on their return to their native country, generally to have adopted their former profession, and to be the bitterest opposers of the popish pretensions of dominion over the eastern churches.

Among those who have most firmly rejected the attempts of the Roman pontiff, Cyrillus Lucar may be reckoned—a man of real

piety and extensive learning, beyond what usually has filled the chair of Constantinople. After diligently examining the Romish and protestant opinions, he seemed much more disposed to form a union with the latter than the former; and in consequence corresponded with the protestants of eminence. This bitterly provoked the catholics. The Jesuits, through the French ambassador at the Porte, exerted all other intrigues to render Cyril odious, and suspected by the Turks. Having gained some envious Greeks to their party, they formed an accusation against the good patriarch, of pretended treason, and procured his death by the Ottoman emperor's orders. His crime was his piety, and disposition to unite the Greek and reformed churches—an offence inexpiable in the sight of Rome and her satellites (1638).

Every artifice continued to be employed by the Jesuits to soften down the differences between the churches; and to make it appear that they were of a trifling and indifferent nature; and therefore that the Greeks might be indulged in all their peculiarities, and yet return to the unity of the church. But all the art employed has never been able to effect the reconciliation; and they appear as distant from each other as ever. The same attempts have as little succeeded with the other oriental churches. They still maintain their independence both of Rome and of Constantinople. The Nestorians, the Monophysites, have their separate patriarchs; and their different branches, Copts and Armenians subsist, though reduced almost to a state of insanity. The church of Russia, a chief member of the Greek communion, holds little connection or none with the patriarchs of Constantinople. It may now be reckoned indeed among the first in extent of empire, yet respecting the life and power of Christianity, very, very little will be found among them: profound ignorance, multiplied superstitions, and most debasing intemperance, mark the clergy and people. It is to be hoped there are exceptions. Our acquaintance with their language is small. I am not informed of any Russian theological work that claims attention, for depth of biblical criticism, or faith unfeigned. A sect, though not of modern date, is said to have occasioned some disturbances in the empire (1666). They called themselves the multitude of the elect, or Isbraniki; their adversaries branded them with the title of Roskolniki, or the multitude of the factious. As we have no explicit account of their tenets, we must be content with the general grounds of their separation from the church of Russia, which they alleged, was on account of the corruptions introduced by the negligence and ambition of their prelates. They affected themselves, extraordinary piety and mortification; and a veneration

for the letter of the holy Scriptures, which was carried to an excess of superstition. They would not allow a priest to minister baptism, who had that day tasted brandy. This seemed indeed a prudent precaution; because a Russian cannot be trusted with the bottle to his lips, without emptying the last drop of its contents: but they appeared to harbour on abundance of follies and superstitions; such as esteeming it to be of the last importance, that their priests should give the benediction with three fingers; as with two only, it would be the depth of heresy. However, we must know more of them before we can form a true judgment. It hardly seems probable, that they were a very enlightened sect; but rather a scion from some of the scattered Paulicians, or Bogomilians, of former days, sprouting afresh, and as they multiplied, awakening fresh attention. They have been excommunicated, dragooned, and exercised with all the gentle corrections of fire, sword, gibbets, imprisonment, and exile, but have maintained their profession, by retiring to the woods and deserts of that forlorn country, where they still subsist, especially among the Calmucs. Since the accession of Peter the Great, they have been treated with mildness, and indulged with toleration. Perhaps there will be found among them a people that shall be counted to the Lord for a generation. I see not through the vast Russian empire, where the truth of godliness is more probably to be sought.

I wish to look round, and discover the living features of animated christianity in the East; but, alas! all is darkness that may be felt, and death-like profession only, within the christian pale. Yet when I see such a man as Cyrillus raised up, and know, that the blessed word of life is in their hands, I cannot but hope there were some happy exceptions to the general ignorance and superstition, and that God had not left himself without witnesses. May their numbers be multiplied more abundantly!

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE PROTESTANT CHURCH.

CHRIST is not divided; unhappily his people are. But if they cultivated the spirit of love and meekness, bearing and forbearing with one another, the little differences of opinion would never be permitted to disturb the unity of spirit, or to break the bond of peace. There is scarce a man who deserves the name of a real protestant, so prejudiced as not to acknowledge, that we are all one in Christ Jesus; why not then love one another out of a pure heart fervently? The

time, I hope, will come—"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." It will be happy for the Church of Christ, when divine charity shall enlarge her borders, and bigotry be driven to her gloomy cell.

The Protestant church comprehends Lutherans, the reformed or Calvinists, and a variety of other denominations, that cannot immediately be classed under the two great general divisions.

I. *The Lutheran Church.*

WE have seen the desolations produced by the ambition and bigotry of the house of Austria, instigated by Rome, and her jesuitical crew, hoping that they could down with it, down even to the ground. The great Head of the Church was otherwise minded. The bush burned and was not consumed. But the Lutheran cause suffered also by the defection of some of its most strenuous supporters. In the beginning of this century (1604), Maurice, Landgrave of Hesse, a man of very eminent attainments, embraced, after deep investigation, the Calvinistic system of doctrine; and remodelled the university of Marburg, and the ecclesiastical establishment of Hesse, after the reformed plan (1619); though not without great opposition from the Lutheran divines. Yet though he thought himself bound to promote the truths, which he had himself embraced; and to exercise the authority with which he was invested, in his own dominions; it is to be observed to his honour, that he shewed christian moderation, and temper in the disputes, which could not but be the consequence; and he is said not to have been chargeable with any acts of oppression or violence, leaving generous liberty of conscience to all his subjects. The Elector of Brandenburg followed his example (1614), and declared for the reformed religion, without enforcing the doctrine of the decrees, or the decisions of Dort; but left every man free liberty to abide, Lutheran or Calvinist, according to his conscience; dispensing his favours to both, without partiality, and recommending a spirit of conciliation; to abstain from offensive terms, or injurious aspersions; consenting that the rights which were objected to might be abolished; and entreating, that wherein they still differed, they would bear with each other, and cultivate a spirit of peace and patience. But to this the Lutheran clergy refused to consent, and not only excited fierce debates, but stirred up the people to a spirit of discontent, and alienation from their sovereign, and tumults which only force could suppress. The Saxon divines took part with their brethren, and unhappily blew up the flames of discord, to the great injury of their cause, and the

hart of their university of Wirtemberg, which the elector was compelled, by the treatment he had received, to forbid his subjects any more to visit.

Good men on both sides lamented, that when the Philistines were upon them, the sons of Israel were setting their swords every man against his fellow; and earnestly wished to reconcile the two great bodies of protestants together, that they might be more united, and form a firmer phalanx against their popish invaders. To hope for uniformity in opinion was a blessing, in the present state of human infirmity, and under the prejudices of education, not to be expected: but to soften down the angles of asperity—never to dispute passionately—to seek not victory, but truth—to give the most favourable explications to the terms used on both sides—to bring forth the great fundamental principles, in which Calvinists and Lutherans were agreed—and in the deeper and abstruser points of difference, to approach as near as possible—and where they could not unite, to agree to bear with each other in the disputed articles, and to keep them as much as possible from producing vain contention, which only begat ill-blood and not conviction—these were the objects of the conciliators. Herein the reformed, it is allowed, were the first to concede, and make approaches: allowing their Lutheran brethren not to have erred in any fundamental doctrine. But the Lutheran divines were more tenacious and less yielding, and refused to acknowledge as much of the Calvinistic tenets; and rejected with too much disdain the conciliatory offers of their brethren. Mutual reproaches, and recriminations tended not to heal but to widen the breach.

(1615.) The peace-loving James I. endeavoured to interpose the weight of his influence, and to solicit this desirable union among the protestant churches. He employed for this end the famous De Moulin, to sound the different parties: but he soon grew discouraged, when he found that the Lutherans testified an utter aversion to accede to the proposal.

(1631.) However, the French protestants, in a synod held at Charenton, determined to give their Lutheran brethren a testimony of their cordial regard; and to open a door for any return which they might judge fit, by declaring, "that the Lutheran profession was truly conformable to the gospel, and free from fundamental errors." But no overtures were the consequence.

(1631.) One conference more indeed was held at Leipsic, between the divines of the two communions; and the spirit, temper, and moderation with which it was managed, gave hope it would re-unite them. The

jealousy of the Lutherans, that some artifices was concealed under the apparent candour and concessions of their brethren, disappointed the happy issue which was expected. After all, the same unchristian distance remained.

(1645.) A more comprehensive scheme, which should comprise Catholics, could hardly succeed in Poland.

(1661.) Earnest to succeed, the landgrave of Hesse renewed the attempt to bring the protestants nearer to each other; and now the fraternal embrace, which closed the conference, promised greater future union; at least mutual forbearance and love. But the moderate men who retired from this pleasing scene, were unable to inspire their Lutheran brethren with their own candour and charity; and only drew upon themselves the invectives of the bigots, as betraying by their indulgence the cause they were deputed to defend. Thus has it often been the lot of the noblest spirits to desire to do good to the ungrateful and the prejudiced, and to be abused for their labours of love.

What the authority of princes, and the weight of synods could not accomplish, individuals might well despair of effecting. Yet one kind and resolute spirit, undimmed by the difficulties, resolved to devote himself to the work; which during forty years, he unweariedly pursued. Wherever he went and made his object known, he was generally received with kindness, and heard with attention: but after all his toils and travels through the protestant regions of Europe, he found obstructions insurmountable, and bigotry and prejudice that refused to bend. But he shall not lose his reward. The Prince of Peace will remember John Dury. (1631—1674).

The good Bishop of Stregnes in Sweden, deserves a memorial for his zealous concurrence with the travelling Scottish pacificator: and Calixtus, (1645), the divinity professor of Helmstadt, seconded warmly the same noble design; but they brought a nest of Lutheran hornets about their ears. The cry of the Church being in danger, drove the peace-making bishop from his sue, to a retirement from the clamours of party: and Calixtus was glad to be hid in the grave from the torrent of abuse and misrepresentation; as sacrificing truth to conciliation. Thus obstinately did the Lutheran divines reject all approaches to communion with their reformed brethren. Unhappily they were not less divided among themselves. Incensed at those who wished to heal the breaches, and to engage men's hearts in a spirit of union and piety, the larger body of the Lutheran Church, especially the Saxon divines, treated them as innovators in religion, and branded them with the names of Syncretists or Pietists. An account of those will include

the most important concerns of the Lutheran church; especially in the point which is the great object which I am pursuing, under every denomination of christians, to discover the true spiritual church of Christ.

At the head of the Syncretists was Calixtus, of whom mention has been made before. The charge laid against him was, his attempt to unite all bodies of professing christians in mutual forbearance and charity with each other, notwithstanding the points of opinion in which they might differ; and, if possible, to enable them, without bitterness and mutual anathemas, to meet in some general principles wherein they all agreed; and to leave all other matters of dispute aside. At least, if any differences were discussed, that it should be done in love and in the spirit of meekness, without breach of communion. He was of opinion, with his friend John Dury, that the apostles' creed contained every article necessary to be believed for salvation; that the ten commandments were a sufficient rule of life; and the Lord's prayer included every essential petition which a christian needed to ask of God. All, therefore, who held these general principles, might, he trusted, give each other the right hand of fellowship, and hope to meet together in the world of the blessed; whether Papists, Reformed, or Lutherans; as each professed to hold these in the same veneration, and to admit their indisputable truth. No man appears a more determined protestant than Calixtus, or has written with greater force against the errors of the Romish church; though he was abused as half a Catholic, because he maintained, that in the church of Rome, the fundamental articles were still held; and that salvation might there be obtained, even though men were under many mistakes and prejudices of education. He admitted the union of churches was impracticable, under the decisions of the council of Trent; but, that the union of charity might be cultivated between the members of the different churches, holding the first common principles of christianity. The divines of Helmstadt united with their colleague in this endeavour: many of their brethren, at Rintelen, Konigsberg, and Jena, approved the general lines of conciliation proposed by them; but they met with the fiercest opposition, were esteemed as traitors to the Lutheran cause, and apostates from the Lutheran faith: and charged with both inclining to the reformed, and the popish religion. Contradictions so glaring, as only the exasperation of prejudice and party could suppose possible or true. The particulars of all the bitter contests and invectives which this controversy occasioned, with the interposition of the civil magistrate, I shall pass over. It affords but a mortifying lesson of human infirmity, that whoever, or whatever is right,

or wrong; wise men, learned men, religious men, should so far deviate from the spirit of truth and meekness: Nor does it give a high opinion of the Saxon divines in particular, who wanted to introduce a new creed of their own sentiments, which could not but have made a division in the Lutheran church. The amiable design of Calixtus, should it be a mistaken charity, pleaded for lenity at least, instead of such bitterness and malignity, as Calovius, at the head of the Saxon Lutheran doctors expressed: but bigots to churches, and advocates for truth, are very different persons. Did religion, indeed, stand merely in opinion, and one line of aberration must not be admitted from what is established in each church, who then can be saved? The consequences are obvious to every enlarged mind, who is at all conversant with the spirit of true christianity.

But the divisions which arose on the account of Pietism, were still more to be lamented, as they served but too awfully to demonstrate, that deep piety in the Lutheran church was an offensive object, and the pretensions to it judged deserving of the sharpest censures.

The origin of Pietism was certainly the apprehension and conviction, that real religion had greatly declined in the Lutheran church—that the clergy were become too inattentive to the care of men's souls, and too attached to this world and its emoluments; or too much engrossed with scientific pursuits, foreign to their immediate designation. That there is always too much reason to fear the decline of true godliness, the experience of all ages testifies.

(1670.) The excellent Spener, a man eminent for real truth and godliness, lamented the declensions which he supposed, at least, he beheld around him. He set himself, therefore, to reanimate the languid zeal, and to quicken the diligence of his brethren, by establishing at Frankfort, societies for religious exercises, for prayer, praise, and mutual communications; in order to bind each other in a firmer bond, to resist the overflowings of ungodliness, and to bear a living testimony by their conduct, to the purity of the truths which they professed to believe. A treatise on the disorders of the church, and the prevailing corruption of manners, with the means best suited to remove them, was circulated by this good man, and awakened very general attention. A variety of persons, in different places, accordingly associated on the plan which Spener had recommended: and, as could not but be the case, awakened the jealousy, and provoked the enmity of the clergy and others, whose conversation they reproved, not merely by the exhibition of a different conduct, but sometimes by rebukes and charges, not always, perhaps, dictated by prudence, or the

meekness of charity. These associations, therefore, met with much opposition: and, as popular odium, or the licentiousness of the baser sort, instigated by their enemies, often interrupted their assemblies, the charge of disturbing the peace of the public was laid to their door: and, as usually some wild-fire is ready to mingle itself with the sacred flame on the altar of truth, persons of an enthusiastic or turbulent disposition, sometimes united with the Pietists, and gave their adversaries occasion to blaspheme.

The alarm which had gone out against this rising sect, collected greater force, and was viewed as a matter of more serious import, when the learned professors, Franckius, Sebadius, and Antonius, with others, uniting cordially with Spener in his pious designs, began to consider the causes of the decline, which was too evident: and supposed they could trace them principally to the improper manner in which young men at the universities had been trained up for the ministry. Discarding, therefore, the metaphysical mode of tuition, and the jargon of the schools, where Aristotle's subtleties had been often more studied than the Bible; and a rage for controversies of no real import to improve the understanding, or to affect the heart, occupied the time, and exalted the conceit of the captious disputants; they resolved to alter their mode of lecturing. Taking the oracles of God for their thesis, they endeavoured to make these pure fountains of wisdom and knowledge better understood, both respecting the doctrines therein contained, and the application of them to the consciences of their pupils; in order to the production of the genuine fruits of righteousness and true holiness. These scriptural exercises excited vast attention (1689). Multitudes pressed to hear them: and that many were affected by them, and brought to a happy change in their religious conduct, even prejudice could not deny. Malignity, indeed, wished to misrepresent what had met only its novelty to offend, but the real reproof contained in such conduct to irritate. The other professors charged them with exciting tumults, and promoting animosities in the university; and, being abundantly the majority, these good men were called to a public trial, for the innovations which they had attempted; and though declared free from heresy or immorality, were forbidden to proceed any farther with the plans of religious instruction, which they had commenced.

(1692.) Suspende'd thus from their attempts to edify the students at Leipsic in sacred literature, and driven from their professorships for the Pietism imputed to them, the university of Halle invited Franck and Antonius thither; and Spener had a similar offer, which he accepted from the Elec-

tor of Helmstedt, at Berlin. They pursued there the same line of conduct, and were attended by the same numerous audience and pupils. The professors and pastors of the Lutheran university of Wirtemberg, were highly incensed at, and condemned these novel practices as detrimental to the interests of the Lutheran church (1695), over which they watched with jealous care: probably they felt it as a reflection upon themselves, that these biblical professors should attract such attention; and their societies formed for prayer and religious exercises, raise an imputation of negligence on the established pastors. For the flame of Pietism had spread through all the Lutheran churches, and in every city, town, and village, persons arose, professing to be stirred up by a divine impression on their minds, to revive the cause of religion, and to rouse the attention of their neighbours to greater seriousness in the concerns of an eternal world. As persons of all conditions and sexes were affected with Pietism, artisans, mechanics, and labourers, met together for religious exercises. The illiterate, as well as the more instructed, prayed and exhorted in these societies; and, as could not but be the case, when the numbers were considerable, and some among them more forward, zealous, and imprudent, than well-informed, occasions of reproach were taken against them; and some, perhaps, justly: and, as is always the case, the irregularities or improper conduct of mistaken individuals, were laid to the charge of the whole body. The clergy especially took a part against these Pietists; and the magistrates being instigated by their fears or jealousies, severe laws were enacted to suppress these societies, and prevent the spreading of these innovations in the Lutheran church.

(1699.) The term Pietist, which was given in derision by the scoffers, to those who attended Franckius and his associates, and lived in a course of strict piety, "was afterwards," says Mosheim, "applied to all who, distinguished by excessive austerity of manners, regardless of truth or opinion, were only intent upon practice, and turned the whole vigour of their efforts towards the attainments of religious feelings and habits." Mosheim was a Lutheran divine, philosophic, and no Pietist. Yet his partial representation speaks nothing unfavourable, when he is compelled to add, as a faithful historian, "that persons of eminent wisdom and sanctity, remarkable for their adherence to truth and love of piety, bore commonly the same approbrious name." And, in another place, "that none could despise their intentions, without appearing the enemy of practical religion." The truth of the matter is, that zealous godliness, as is usual,

provoked the reproach of the cross. But the learned ecclesiastic mistakes, or misrepresents the real character of Franck and his colleagues. So far were they from being regardless of truth and opinion, that no men more rigidly contended for, or taught more explicitly, the fundamental doctrines of christianity. They, indeed, were no bigots to the Lutheran profession, though they preferred it; but they supposed many of their reformed brethren, equally sound in the fundamental articles of faith with themselves: and therefore they would not refuse their friendship and society, because of the opinions in which they differed. So far, indeed, the charge may be admitted in the fullest latitude, that these good men looked upon the tenets of barren orthodoxy, when not attended with divine power in the conscience, and purity in the conduct, as nothing worth; and were more earnest to inculcate the necessity of faith, with its effects, than to establish a rigid conformity with the Lutheran definitions. Why it should be supposed that their manners were austere to excess, I see no one proof produced; and am disposed to believe, from all I have read or known, that they were as remarkably amiable in their behaviour, as kind in their spirit, and compassionate towards the feeble-minded. Nor in a day of great dissipation and corruption of manners, which Mosheim everywhere confesses and laments, ought a peculiar carefulness to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, to be branded with so harsh an insinuation. As to their efforts to attain religious feelings and habits, the author has not perfectly understood the subject, if he supposes they meant to substitute religious feelings, in the place of practical godliness, which he allows them to have pursued; and, if he means to put a contempt on religious feelings or habits; I own, I wonder how any man can be supposed to exercise divine love to God or man; to live in real habits of devotion; or to read and believe the great and precious promises of God's word; and not feel the outflowings of desire, and the sensations of delight. A religion without feeling is certainly not the religion of the Psalmist, nor compatible with the graces of the Spirit, described by St. Paul. But the private meetings, in which their devotional exercises were held, and the feelings of their hearts poured out in prayer and praise, were regarded as very enthusiastic, and reprobated by those, who, not being at all inclined to join with them, were ready to justify their own superior excellence, by degrading their brethren with imputations of fanatic devotion, and unnecessary austerity.

Nothing can better express wherein this austerity consisted, than the very account Mosheim himself gives of the motives which

influenced these good men, and the steps they took to revive the decaying interest of the true Lutheran religion. They imputed to the clergy the great cause of the declension evident. They supposed their manner of preaching unedifying; their conduct not purely exemplary; and their negligence of their holy function, as highly blameable. To this they attributed chiefly the overflowings of ungodliness, the progress of vice, and the general carelessness about religious worship in the church, in private families, and secret devotion. As they esteemed this the source of all the evils, which they saw and lamented, it was natural for them to begin at the fountain-head: and as this necessarily implied reflection on the pastors themselves, and on the universities which had sent them forth so ill-qualified for their charge, both were highly exasperated against these reformers, and set their faces against their schemes for amelioration. It is pleasing to trace the steps which they took, and the amendments they proposed, in their preparation of young men for the ministry, their enemies themselves being the reporters.

They laid it down as a sacred axiom, that no man could have a divine call into the church as a minister, unless his heart was filled with the love of Christ, and of the souls redeemed by his blood—he must be unexceptionable in holy conversation—and endued, with a competent measure of literature, especially well versed in the holy scriptures. They therefore banished the scholastic theology, which ministered only questions instead of godly edifying—they avoided dwelling strongly on the points in dispute between christians; and discouraged all bitterness of controversy, though they neglected not to arm their pupils with divine truth. The scriptures were the first object which they commended to their study and attention, making all philosophic pursuits, and ornamental literature a subordinate part of education. This was interpreted by their adversaries into a contempt for human learning, though confessedly none had a larger share of it than these worthy professors; and their pupils were no dishonour to them in this behalf; but because they treated as of less importance the defence of the outworks of christianity, such as merely arguing on its evidence and reasonableness; and rather preferred an immediate attack on the conscience by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; the wise apologists and disputers of this world charged them with degrading the dignity of polemic theology, and giving the enemies of christianity advantage.

In consequence of these views of the internal spirit of a minister of Christ, they insisted upon the necessity of a solemn dedication of himself to God; and that every cler-

gymnasium ought to be an example and model of the doctrines which he taught, and the practices he recommended: affirming, to the great indignation of their brethren, that no man could be truly called to the ministry of the gospel, who was not in his own soul a sharer of the blessings of divine grace, and a pattern of his own precepts: a strictness this, in the eyes of the laxer professors, which exposed the Pietists to much censure, and involved them in many disputes, "whether a bad ecclesiastic could be a true minister of the sanctuary," and such like unprofitable questions. They recommended to their pupils to preach the simplicity which is in Christ, and not to be tied down to any phraseology that scholastic theology had sanctioned: but the most offensive part of their instructions to the young students for orders, was an abstinence from a variety of things, in which the professors of religion generally indulged themselves. Some of these, though in their nature not absolutely sinful, they supposed to have a strong tendency to divert the mind from serious objects, and to corrupt the heart with inordinate love of pleasure. Others they reckoned in themselves immoral, as the stage, and such like entertainments; gaming of all kinds; books of a corrupting tendency, however humorous or well written; and sitting long at feasts, or wine, where, though not intemperate themselves, their presence might embolden others: nor did they reckon as innocent, but rather dangerous, and to be avoided, all promiscuous meetings of the sexes, for dancing and jollity of every kind; and even the sports of the field were prohibited to their pupils, as not seemly and of good report for ministers of the sanctuary. Many thought these instructions unreasonable and severe, and that the clergy might well indulge themselves and countenance their people in what they were pleased to term, a little innocent pleasure. Disputes on these subjects arose; and, as is the case with disputes in general, they were carried on sometimes with too much asperity.

But nothing excited in the clergy and others, as has been hinted before, more general opposition than the societies, which the Pietists every where instituted for religious exercises: and into which they desired to admit none, whose exemplary conduct did not adorn their profession. This kind of separation from the world, and pious singularity, was peculiarly offensive.

That among the multitudes who were united with the Pietists in these societies, some betrayed intemperate zeal, and occasionally broached erroneous opinions, was to be expected and lamented. None, however, more sharply condemned all such things than the body of the Pietists themselves.

Whether Arnold is to be reckoned in the

number of those censurable in this respect, I know not. His ecclesiastical history is charged by Mosheim as too partial to heretics. The bitter and sarcastic writings of Dippelius certainly deserve censure. I was the mention of the visionaries, such as Petersen or the Theosophists, revived by Jacob Boehmen and others, who, though for a time they glared as the meteor in the sky, and attracted the eyes of gazing curiosity, suggested nothing tending to the revival of general religion and piety; any more than the tribe of prophets and prophetesses, who alarmed the fears of the credulous, had their day, and were forgotten.

Two things, however, deserve to be particularly observed. First, That among the Lutherans an evident great departure had begun from the life of godliness, which animated the first reformers. Scientific pursuits were more in request than gospel purity; and, as is too observable, the decline of piety and the progress of philosophy are always accompanied with an equal proportion of infidelity, and cavilling at the doctrines of revelation—a charge not peculiar to the Lutheran church, but awfully applicable alike to the reformed, as we shall see, and, as has been noted, to the Romish communion. But infidel writings had not yet prevailed with the same open contempt, as at present, of the religion of their country; though the philosophic tribe, with Leibnitz at their head, was paving the way: and Martin Sel-del published his impious opinion of the person and office of Jesus Christ, which in the main hath found since more strenuous defenders than he could muster in his own day.

But 2dly, A more pleasing feature of the Lutheran church appeared in the evident and wide-spread revival of godliness, which, however opposed by philosophers, disliked by the clergy, or ridiculed by the multitude, produced a host of confessors. That some really good men might have been prejudiced against the Pietists, may be admitted. They too hastily entertained the unfavourable reports of their maligners, and were led away by their misrepresentations: but among those who bore the name of Pietists, or were at least supposed to be pietistically inclined, the vitality of the spiritual Church of Christ was chiefly to be found. The lives and labours of these men would have been an ornament to whatever church they had belonged. I dwell with greater pleasure on these, than on all the votaries of Aristotle, or the reformers of the philosophic school, the learned, and in their day men of renown. I am neither in pursuit of the Stagyrte, nor his correctors, of the new philosophy nor of the old, of Theosophists, or metaphysicians, but of the true and faithful followers of the Son of God, in simplicity and godly sincerity

Before I close the account of the Lutheran church, their attempts to send the light of divine truth into heathen lands, deserve an honourable memorial. The Danes have been particularly mindful to communicate to their colonies and settlements in Asia, Africa, and America, as well as Greenland, a knowledge of the salvation which is by Jesus Christ.

(1634.) A zealous individual, the learned Heyling of Lubec, penetrated into Abyssinia with this intention; and recommending himself to the emperor's favour, rose to the highest office in the state. In returning to Europe for missionary assistance, he perished by the way: nor has it since appeared, that he left any abiding trace of successful labours behind him. The pious Duke of Saxe Gotha wished to renew the experiment, in the person of the Abbot Gregory, an Abyssinian, who had resided for a while in Europe (1657). He was unfortunately shipwrecked on his voyage, and that good design failed. Wansleb (1663), who offered to supply his place, grievously disappointed the expectations of his noble patron, and proved himself unworthy of the office which he had undertaken: since that time nothing I believe hath been attempted in Abyssinia of a missionary nature. But in such a cause surely we should never be weary in well-doing, or faint at our disappointments. The time shall come, when Ethiopia and Saba shall stretch out their hands unto God. In this noble contention of zeal, the Lutheran and Reformed church may strive without the breach of charity; and blessed are they who shall arise to devote themselves to this self-denying service, and become the honoured instruments in this glorious cause.

II. Of the Reformed Churches.

THE reformed churches continued rather on the increase, except in France. The loss of the Lutherans in Germany, by the defection of the Prince of Hesse and Elector of Brandenburg, was followed by the Duke of Holstein, and the Saxon Duke of Dessau (1688). And in Denmark, multitudes departed from the Lutheran tenets respecting the eucharist, to the more rational and scriptural ones held by the reformed. But the great accession to the reformed churches, was principally owing to the wide extended settlements of the English in North America, and their possessions in Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands; whither they carried their own profession of faith, and extended it among the Indian tribes, and the unhappy negroes, who, though too much neglected, were sometimes the objects of instruction in religious knowledge. I hardly mention the establishments in India and the East, which as yet formed inconsiderable

factories: and where the attention to commerce left too little care about religion.

England itself, a chief member of the reformed churches, happily, as has been mentioned, escaped the snares which popery had laid for her; and though with many blemishes, continued a glorious church. Yet, though enabled to struggle against her foreign adversaries, convulsions within, and that between brethren of the same faith, shook the foundations of church and state to the centre.

(1603.) James I. who ascended the throne after Elizabeth, with the cordial approbation of all parties, was unhappily a wavering, unsettled character. With the pride of a pedant, and the dupe of flattery, he entertained a high opinion of his own king-craft. Educated in the Kirk, he had professed the most unshaken attachment to the Scottish church, and her presbytery, "as the purest Kirk under the sun:" but he had no sooner crossed the Tweed, and met the bowing bishops, and the magnificence of the English court, than he relished them far beyond the land of his nativity, and thought them more congenial to the high monarchical principles which he was disposed to entertain. The Puritans were sanguine in their expectation of favour and indulgence under a Scottish king, brought up among their brethren; but they soon found themselves woefully mistaken; as James far preferred the pomp of cathedral worship, to the simplicity of the Genevan ceremonial. Yet as he loved to display his own theological knowledge, and gloried in his pacific principles, he held a grand conference at Hampton Court, with the professed intention of reconciling the differences between the church and the Puritans: in which he affected to act the impartial umpire. But the impious flattery of Whitgift gained him wholly. Won by the high-flown compliments paid to his wisdom, his self-conceit greedily swallowed what the courtly prelate exclaimed with rapture, "that the king spake by the special assistance of God's Spirit." Whilst the hypocritical Bancroft, in the same strain of adulation, falling upon his knees before him, "protested his heart melted with joy, that Almighty God had given them such a king, as since Christ's time had not been." * These incense-bearing bishops beat the stiff Puritans hollow; who could offer no such adulation. Besides their proposals for church government, accorded not with his high prerogative principles, to which a hierarchy and lord bishops, his supporters, were much more agreeable. A few trifling alterations in the liturgy, left the Puritan party as discontented as ever. Respecting doctrine, no alteration had yet been whisper-

* Though I hope Whitgift and Bancroft were good men and good bishops, yet historic impartiality, compels me to condemn a conduct so destitute of the simplicity which is in Christ.

ed. The bishops held the Calvinistic system, and abhorred popery. The excellent abbot who filled the see of Canterbury, and was firm in attachment to the ecclesiastical establishment, had been strongly fixed in Calvinistic principles. He was a man of uncommon piety and gentleness of spirit, an utter enemy to all constraint in matters of conscience; and willing to indulge his dissenting brethren, as many of the other bishops thought, to a fault. It was during his government of the church (1618), that the famous synod of Dort was held, of which I shall speak hereafter, and King James, always great in religious disputes, dispatched three divines of eminence to attend, as from the reformed church of England, with their other brethren, to decide on the important controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians. The excellent and amiable Hall, afterwards bishop of Norwich, was one of them.

Though James acceded to the condemnation of the Arminians, the articles of the church of England being till then at least, held indisputably Calvinistic, yet his dislike to the Puritans, whom he permitted his bishops to persecute, led him to a more ceremonious worship, and a fickleness in leaning to the doctrine which he had condemned: and records remain, which lead to just suspicion of his strong inclination to popery, as more conformed to the despotism he always affected and desired; and his rage to match Charles the heir-apparent with a popish princess, justly alarmed the jealousy of every true Protestant.

In his hatred of the Puritans; his thirst for despotic power unfettered by parliaments; his partiality to Rome; and favour towards those who espoused the Arminian principles, and the pageantry of ceremonial worship, Charles I. exceeded his father; instigated and influenced by Laud, whom he had raised to the archbishopric of Canterbury: a prelate of the most insolent temper, and the most superstitious. Neither justice nor compassion stood in his way, when the Puritans were to be oppressed, insulted and ruined.* Many of them were driven from their native land, and fled to other countries of Europe and America, and more it is said were with Cromwell actually embarked, when an order compelled their stay, to submit to the severities that should be exercised upon them (1637).

* (1630.) A single trait of Laud's character drawn from his own diary, will delineate the man better than any painter. Dr. Leighton, one of the Puritans, was, by the archbishop's instigation, condemned in the Star Chamber to the most atrocious and ignominious punishment. When sentence was pronounced in court, Laud pulling off his cap and lifting up his eyes to Heaven, gave thanks to God who had enabled him to behold this vengeance on his enemies, and he thus records the execution of the sentence:

"Nov. 6.—1. He was severely whipt before he was set in the pillory.—2. Being set in the pillory he had one of

Driven by these ill-advisers on his ruin, Charles armed those with despair, who felt that resolute resistance only could break the yoke of bondage, ecclesiastical and civil, from their necks. I pretend not to vindicate or palliate the violences and crimes that followed, when the Puritans of different sects uniting under their leaders first overturned the government, and then fell under the servitude of a protector and a military rule, which they had unintentionally contributed to erect. Really good men are always the few in every denomination. And as their principles forbid them to seek this world as their kingdom, or to obtain power and influence by undue means, they are scarcely ever the persons who lead their party, but are compelled to swim with the stream, and of two evils to choose the least. Hence, in all revolutions, the power lodges in the hands of the ambitious, the violent, the crafty, and the men of least conscience, whatever piety may be pretended, when it can be made subservient to their purpose. And thus all parties in power have equally abused it; and the Puritans meanly as unchristianly retaliated upon the bishops and clergy, all the ill-usage and intolerance of which they had themselves so heavily complained. Indeed respecting real religion, Charles's character and conduct was little less equivocal than Cromwell's. And though in moral excellence the one will be allowed the better man, the other, whether fanatic or hypocrite, was certainly the abler politician, a firmer antagonist to the papacy, and a more strenuous supporter of the protestant cause.

It was in the midst of these convulsions, that the Independents arose from very lowly beginnings, to the summit of influence: preferred by Cromwell to Presbyterians and Episcopalians; both of whom he more dreaded, as ready to erect a powerful government in the church, inimical to that which he wished to establish.

The Brownists were the original stock. From Leyden, Robinson, their teacher, reimported the tenets of that sectary with considerable improvements, and they spread with the greatest rapidity. In doctrine they were perfectly of accord with the reformed, and with the articles of the church. In discipline, they maintained the independence of each congregation, as a complete church in itself. They allowed not every man to minister on his own motion, but only such as

his ears cut off.—3. One side of his nose was all up.—4. He was branded on the cheek with a red-hot iron, with the letters S. S. On that day or night, his nose upon his back, ear, nose, and face being not yet cured, he was whipped again at the pillory in Chancery, cutting off the other ear, sitting the other side of his nose, and branding the other cheek.

Of what a spirit must that man have been, that could with apparent satisfaction record in a private diary, such an act of cruelty, injustice, and malignity, perpetrated under the cloak of law and religion!

were called by the church, and who ought to be endued with competent learning. They avowed submission to the civil powers, and that a kingly government, bounded by just and wholesome laws, is both allowed by God, and also a good accommodation unto men. But the truth seems to be, that though they could submit to this government, they preferred, and wished with the Anabaptists, and other sectaries, a republic, in preference to a monarchy; and, whilst it lasted, were its steadiest supporters. Many excellent men were of this denomination, eminent for knowledge as piety, among whom Dr. Owen holds a distinguished place. After the restoration they sunk very low. At the revolution they formed a union with the presbyterians, but continued few comparatively; till of later years their congregations have greatly increased from causes I shall detail hereafter.

(1647.) During the scenes of contention and turbulence, in which church government bore so great a part, various sects sprung up, many of whose names are only preserved as monuments of human folly. One only continuing to our days, deserves a more particular attention, the sect of the Quakers. Their apostle, George Fox, a shoemaker, supposing himself divinely inspired, rushed forth to proclaim war against all past and present modes of church government, as Babylonish inventions. The clergy, and all forms of religious worship, were particular objects of his abhorrence. He and his followers often entered the churches, expressly to interrupt the public service, and revile the ministers. Women as well as men joined in these disorderly proceedings; and were often committed to prison by the magistrate, as disturbers of the peace: in which sufferings they gloried. Gentle and mild as the present race appears, the first founders of Quakerism were violent, unruly, and headstrong; and exclusive of the matter which they pretended to teach, their manners were as highly exceptionable for their turbulence, as for the singularities they affected. When the first ebullition had exhibited the most blameable instances of fury, immodesty, and folly approaching to madness, the next generation softened down into simpler manners, and a more rational procedure. During the protectorate they were the violent and avowed enemies of Cromwell, whose dread of them for a while, induced him by the rigorous arm of punishment, to endeavour to suppress their fanatic rage; but finding it in vain, he confined himself to diligence in watching their motions, and counteracting the mischief which he apprehended from them.

Under Charles II. the famous Robert Barclay drew up his apology, and endeavoured to render their theological system more

plausible, and divested of all that the first more fanatical preachers had broached of error and absurdity. Still two things remained, which exposed them to the greatest trouble and vexations. Holding the unlawfulness of oaths they refused to swear allegiance to the government, and alike holding the unlawfulness of tythes, the law alone enforced the payment; a method when constantly to be resorted to, as troublesome to the plaintiff, as it was vexatious and finally injurious to the defendant; who was compelled at last to pay, with costs of suit, often far exceeding the original demand.

James II. favoured them with all sectaries, insidiously hoping by this means to gain an easier toleration for his Catholic brethren. And he had an especial regard for their chief man, William Penn, the well-known founder of the present flourishing colony of Pennsylvania; whither he led a large body of his brethren to escape the vexations to which they were continually subjected at home.

William the Third, the great recoverer of our national liberties, embraced them in his generous toleration, and indulged them in their peculiarities. Since that time they have in general proved dutiful subjects, and contributed greatly to the prosperity of the commonwealth by their industry and frugality.

Their fundamental doctrine is derived from the ancient mystic school, "That in every human being there is an internal light, or Christ within, a portion of the same eternal reason that exists in God." On this leading principle all their system depends; which necessarily excluding the idea of the vicarious substitution of Christ, terminates ultimately and really in refined deism. This reason is the same in every man, Jews, Turks, and heathen; and requires only to be brought into exercise, in silence, meditation, and the removal of the envelopments of carnal appetites, which obstruct its sublimation in order to rise into perfection.

All being alike endued with this inward light, all have an equal right, whether men or women, to edify their brethren by its emanations, as they feel the motions of the internal word. Forms of devotion, hymns or sacraments are therefore superfluous: even the holy Scriptures themselves have no more authority than the discourses of those who have the same inspirer.

To procure the subdual of the animal man, that would bury the divine seed in darkness, the greatest abstemiousness of living is to be observed, and every indulgence avoided: not only all amusements are to be renounced as criminal, but all shew of politeness, or respect of persons, is absolutely to be abstained from. These form the most distinguishing peculiarity in Quaker manners.

But to return to the thread of the English Church History. When after the turbulence of the civil war, on the death of Cromwell, Charles II. was restored, (1660), the former persecutions of the Puritans and Dissenters were renewed, as soon as Charles was well settled on the throne; and episcopal government set up in Scotland, as well as England; and by the act of uniformity all ministers were ejected from their cures, and prohibited from teaching, who objected to prelatical government (1662), and to be re-ordained by bishops. After scenes of violence and oppression on the one hand, and opposition, loud murmurs, and invectives on the other, some men of gentler tempers wished to soften down all the asperities of Christian brethren, and to induce them to a greater union, or tolerance, both in doctrine and discipline; that Episcopalians, with Presbyterians and Independents, the two great sects might coalesce, and then the rest would be more easily brought in. The pacificators, though attached to episcopacy, and the established worship, wished to concede its necessity as a divine institution, and essential to the being of the church, though contending for its antiquity; and as contributive to the well-being of the church. They would not therefore exclude from communion those who preferred other forms of government or worship, whether abroad or at home. And as to doctrines, they desired to reduce them to fewer heads, in which Calvinists and Arminians might meet, leaving the abstruser points of difference, as not essential to salvation, to be held by each without provoking contention, or exciting bitterness of spirit. These conciliatory divines were termed *Lætitudinarians*, and though confessedly eminent for learning, and of blameless manners, drew upon themselves the bitter reproaches of the rigid on both sides; as men destitute of real principles of religion, and fit for any change.

But these attempts proved abortive, and it was only on another revolution of government, that toleration delivered those from many penal laws, who objected to subscribe the act of uniformity.

That a great decline in the life of true christianity towards the end of this century was observable, is generally agreed. It had made rapid strides in the reign of Charles the Second, at whose accession the profligate manners of the court encouraged every abomination. The rigid maxims of the Puritans, with their starched persons, were held in aversion and turned into ridicule. Men easily and rapidly passed to the extremes of vice, to avoid the suspicion of the semblances of piety. And as a life of dissipation was in fashion, religion began to be a contemptible thing. Hence, since peculiar seriousness branded a man as puritanical, and ef-

fectually prevented all church advancement, the clergy took peculiar care to escape, as far as possible, from what must destroy their hopes of preferment, and not to be righteous overmuch, or sharp rebukers of courtly immoralities.

Theological subjects also began exceedingly to give place to literature more polite, and knowledge more scientific. The candidates for the ministry at the universities were diverted by the classics, buried in mathematics, or bewildered in metaphysics; and the bible, if not among the proscribed books, was neglected grievously: and it would hardly have been a matter of good report in college, to have it said that a man read and studied the scriptures diligently, except as a matter of science. Thus men made vast progress in all branches of human learning, whilst biblical studies, especially in any devotional way, were little attended to.

From the dregs of former sects, one is said to have left pernicious effects, and is branded with the name of Antinomian, carrying the reformed doctrines respecting the decrees to an abuse before unknown, these pleaded, "because the elect must be saved, that all calls, admonitions and exhortations were vain. That nothing was to be preached, but the promises in Christ. And as it was admitted, that the elect never fall finally from grace, they suggested, that a man might live in the grossest crimes, and continue a believer: and not being under the law, would not have sin imputed to him, being complete in Christ." The numbers indeed of those who professed these tenets were very few, whilst too many who still held the Calvinistic system, lived as if they believed them to be true.

But a far more pregnant cause of this declension than any other, arose from the new method of preaching, adopted by the *latitudinarian* divines above mentioned, who being chiefly Arminians in opinion, wished to avoid the peculiar and characteristic doctrines of christianity, which had been so much dwelt upon formerly, and to confine their instructions to the beauty of virtue, and the force of moral obligation. Thus, without the great mainspring of christianity, they laboured in most admired compositions, to teach men to be virtuous, till all power of godliness was lost; and an awful demonstration was given, that when the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, is not taught and felt, all other endeavours to correct the morals of mankind will be impotent and vain.

By these men also a singular schism was introduced into the church, towards the end of the century, when, on the abdication of James II. and the accession of William III. a number of the episcopal bench, who were high in their notions of royal prerogative, as

well as in the divine right of episcopacy, and bound to the hereditary line of Stuart by principles of passive obedience and non-resistance, refused to acknowledge William III. as a lawful king. They were consequently deposed, and their sees filled by the most eminent of the latitudinarian doctors, Tillotson, Moore, Patrick, Kidder, Fowler, and Cumberland; who made no scruple of occupying the vacant bishoprics; and were esteemed by the high church party, who espoused the ejected bishops' cause, as robbers and intruders; and charged with the deadly crimes of rebellion against God and the king, and with schism of the church. Thus two parties arose, more peculiarly distinguished than before, of high-churchmen, the excluded non-jurors, and all those who approved their conduct, and held the same opinions of monarchy and episcopacy: though to keep their preferments, they took the oaths, and submitted to King William. The other party, more moderate, or low-churchmen, entertained more liberal opinions respecting the people's right in certain cases, to choose their own governors, and of the mitigated ecclesiastical authority, which claimed no dominion over the consciences of men, or privileges, but under acts of parliament.

To this day the same parties subsist; though the high-churchmen are reduced very low: and, indeed, if these new bishops, according to the high-church principles, were intruders, rebellious, and schismatical, and all their ordinations invalid, there is hardly an ecclesiastic in the land who does not derive his sacred character through them and their successors: and, therefore, according to high-church principles, their ministrations are null and void; but though the pride and intolerance of some who occupy these high places, are much the same as in their predecessors, and have procured them the character of high-churchmen; they choose not to admit the invalidity of the powers, which have advanced and consecrated them to their present eminence; content with the honour and emoluments, and not disposed to quit their stations, through any scruple about the legality of their appointment.

It must be remarked, that however declining the state of religion at the end of the century appeared, never had England produced so many, or so able writers on sacred subjects of every kind, as in the former part of it. Of these the works of many will live to edify the latest posterity: among them some of the English bishops maintain a high rank. The Puritan divines were remarkably laborious, and deep in biblical literature. But latterly a great change was perceivable. The men of the first and best generation were gathered to their fathers—another race of finer polish arose, less attached to the

characteristic doctrines of christianity. Arminianism in principle generally prevailed; and ingenious defences of christianity against the infidels, and compositions of an admired purity of the moral kind, were in the highest estimation. The great doctrines of the fall, and its consequences—the corruption of human nature—the redemption by atonement—the justification of a sinner by faith alone—and the necessity of the influences of the Holy Ghost to produce all purity of heart and life—these, and the like topics, grew out of vogue, and gave place to the more philosophic system of moral suasion, metaphysical reasoning, and ethical essays on virtue, its beauty and obligations. Yet there remained some, many, faithful adherents to the Calvinistic doctrines of the articles; and even Bishop Burnet, not too much attached to them, owns, that however generally subscribed by the Arminians for preferment, they were certainly inconsistent with their opinions; and that this subscription was a great violation of ingenuousness. Not that all religion rested with the Calvinists alone: that it chiefly did, may be concluded from the lives of the dissenters, who were certainly more strict in general, more pious and irreproachable, than their countrymen of the established church; and such was the change now wrought in sentiment, that if there were any in the church who preached the Calvinistic doctrine, and maintained a peculiar separation of themselves from the world, they were often branded as Presbyterians. Yet among those who held the Arminian principles and high-church ideas, there were men of uncommon excellence and piety, such as bishop Kenn and others, whose primitive manners truly adorned their christian profession. The regularity and decencies of worship were then also observed in many more families, and of the great and noble, than at present. These laxity and growing dissipation of our day have almost utterly discarded. I will not affirm, that there was in that age more true religion among the superior ranks of life, than in our day; though I believe there was: certainly, however, the forms and appearances of it were more respectably maintained.

But there is one that seeth and judgeth. The Lord knoweth those that are his. We must leave the final decision to himself: and whilst we speak the painful result of our own convictions, we may still comfortably hope, where the blessed book of God was so generally diffused, and works of such excellent instruction multiplied, that many, very many, amidst the great prevalence of evil, and the unchristian conversation around them, held fast the faithful word, and lived in the practice and died in the comfort of true christianity.

SCOTLAND.

BEFORE the close of the former century, the Reformation, after a sharp struggle, had been established in Scotland, and that kingdom had cast off the popish yoke. As is usually the case on such occasions, the very collision of the adverse parties had struck out sparks of burning zeal, on the one side to suppress, and on the other to spread, tenets rendered more dear and important, by the very sufferings which they brought on the confessors. Thus the sacred flame of truth had kindled in many a faithful bosom. Knox and his zealous associates had issued forth to preach the everlasting gospel, and rapidly spread the evangelical doctrines through the land. The church government was as nearly as possible conformed to the Genevan model; and James I. who had been brought up in the Kirk, professed the most zealous attachment to it, as the purest church upon earth.

Many burning and shining lights, which the succinctness of this history will not allow me particularly to specify, illumined that northern region in the long reign of this monarch. During his residence in Scotland, the bitter disputes about prelacy and presbyterianism, were rather compromised than conclusively settled. But, on the accession of the Scottish monarch to the English crown, they revived with all unchristian temper. Gained to the hierarchy, James cast his weight into that scale, to the great disgust of the majority of his northern subjects, and compelled them reluctantly to submit to an episcopal regimen. But the discontented increasing, and more violent measures being pursued by his unhappy son and the bishops who presided in the Scottish church, a convulsion followed, which terminated in the overthrow of monarchy and episcopacy. By dire experience the unhappy Charles the First now found, that he had no refuge among subjects, whose affections he had alienated by supporting an ecclesiastical regimen, which they abhorred. The very army to whom he fled for protection, basely sold and delivered him up into the hands of his enemies; and left one more record of experience to princes, how dangerous it is to irritate men's minds, by pains and penalties for religious opinions.

Cromwell's dominion was as ill-brooked by the Scottish nation, as that of Charles the First; but their impotent attempt to restore Charles the Second failed, and they experienced the rigour of the protector's arm. That popish proselyte, who had readily been prevailed upon to play the hypocrite among the rigid Scots covenanters, had however received so much disgust from them, that he resolved, after the battle of Worcester, to

return no more to Scotland, but await his fate, and seek concealment in England.

During the protectorate, Scotland enjoyed many and great blessings—the gospel was diligently preached, and the number of the faithful multiplied. The restoration brought back episcopacy and disgust to all the presbyterian party. During this reign and the succeeding, Scotland was a perpetual scene of struggles, discontent, and irritating, instead of conciliatory measures. Many of the best men and ministers in the nation were persecuted and driven from their country, by the strong arm of ecclesiastical power, exerted rigorously to impose an establishment, to which the great body of the ministers and people were utterly averse. The bishops sent into Scotland, with Archbishop Sharp at their head, served by their insolence and ill-conduct to render the prejudices against episcopacy more inveterate. The peaceful and seraphic Leighton, after doing all the good, and preventing all the evil in his power, ashamed of his associates, and convinced of the improper steps taken to enforce an episcopal government, to which the body of the people was averse, resigned his archbishopric, and retired to a private station. His works will live a monument of evangelical piety; in which the distinguished purity of the style can only be exceeded by the excellence and energy of the sentiment. The brutal Archbishop Sharp, who had rejected every mild and conciliating step suggested by his truly apostolical coadjutor, after having driven him by despair of serving the church, from his see of Glasgow, fell the victim of his own violence, and died by the hands of assassins: detested even by those who most condemned the bloody deed. The revolution under William the Third, brought back to the Scots their favourite ecclesiastical government and discipline, which hath been continued to the present period.

During all this century the Scots may be considered as a remarkably religious people. And though the life of real godliness can never be supposed universal in any nation, yet the number of evangelical and zealous ministers in the kirk was great, and their faithful followers numerous. Remarkable instances of great revivals of religion in various places are also on record. And though their solemn league and covenant, and too many instances of undue heat and intolerance, will never meet approbation from the historian of candour and liberality; yet, with every thing which can be pointed out as censurable, no protestant church, in general, more eminently distinguished itself by purity of doctrine and holiness of conversation. My limits restrain me from entering into minuter details.

IRELAND.

It may be a matter of some doubt, whether the kingdom of Ireland can be reckoned among the protestants or catholics; for, though the government was in the hands of the former, the far greater part of the subjects continued in papal superstition and ignorance. Kept under by the strong arm of power, they waited the opportunity of emancipating themselves from this restraint, and restoring the dominancy of the popish religion. The rising discontents under Charles the First, afforded the moment of revolt, and the troops being employed in the fatal contest between the king and the parliament, the Irish rose with savage fury, and massacred seventy thousand protestants in cold blood. The irresistible arm of Cromwell reduced them to obedience, and punished them for their rebellion.

In the beginning of the century, some blessed labourers cultivated that vineyard. The names of Archbishop Usher, Bishop Babington, Downham, and others, will ever be mentioned as the ornaments of that day, and of the church which their labours edified. Nor, when the usurper seized the reins of government were the concerns of religion neglected, but a number of faithful and zealous ministers sought to extend the knowledge of the doctrines which are according to godliness among them. On the Restoration, the episcopal government was restored with the regal; but the court of Charles II. produced few such prelates as had blessed the land in the commencement of the century. The same fearful decay among the churchmen was to be observed in Ireland as in England: and the popish bigot, James II. wished to suspend all laws against those of his own faith, and to encourage the progress of his own religion. He found also among them his most strenuous supporters; and when unable in England to raise the least body of partisans openly to resist the authority of William the Third, Ireland invited him to struggle for his abdicated throne; and the English, under their glorious deliverer, were obliged to fight and conquer that rebellious country. But the true religion continued in a state of great decay—little was done effectually to diffuse the principles of protestantism. The papists, far the superior number, though under many disabilities, adhered to Rome and her superstitions. Satisfied with all the civil and ecclesiastical emoluments, the nominal protestants expressed very little zeal for the real conversion of their popish neighbours. In all that is worthy the name of religion Ireland sunk very low; nor were there scarcely any partial revivals. A death-like stupor seems to have prevailed universally. Between pro-

testants and papists a strong line was drawn; but as to the life of godliness the difference was very little.

HOLLAND

STANDS next among the reformed governments in eminence. Though religious toleration was nowhere more nobly generous and extensive, the reformed religion was the only one established by the state, and that of far the greater body of the people. About the commencement of this century arose among them a sect, that hath received the name of Arminians from its author, a divinity professor at Leyden; whose opinions produced the most unhappy dissensions, not only in the United Provinces, but throughout the christian world. He had been educated at Geneva in the Calvinistic doctrines, but early in life began to be offended with the decrees as unconditional and absolute; and pleaded for what he judged the more rational system of universal redemption. What he himself adopted he publicly taught; and as those tenets militated so strongly against the religion of his country, he was soon branded with heretical pravity, and the sound divines of that communion, with Gomarus his colleague at their head, expressed their high disapprobation and censure. The controversy was sharply maintained, and many ecclesiastics of the Dutch church, and others (1609), adopted the opinions of Arminius, who died in the midst of these contests: but he left able and resolute defenders, who carried on the war with redoubled vigour: among these were the famous Episcopius, Grotius, and Barneveldt. The Arminians claimed toleration; and a compromise was offered, provided they would renounce the principles of Socinianism, of which they were suspected, and to which it was supposed their tenets led. Repeated conferences, however, were ineffectual to restore the broken bonds of charity. The Calvinistic divines, fully persuaded that the Arminian principles tended to sap the vitals of christianity, and to destroy all the most important peculiarities of the religion of God incarnate, urged the magistrates to interpose their authority. Mosheim, though partial to the Arminians, admits that their latitudinarian principles led them to friendship with those, whose radical opposition to christianity was suspected, and whose conduct was very unbecoming the gospel of Christ; and that by this means they confirmed the bad opinion of their designs, which was suggested by their adversaries.

The peculiar sentiments of the Arminians, as contained in the writings of their leader and founder, turned on five points.

1. That salvation was bestowed on the

elect, on account of faith and perseverance foreseen : and damnation inflicted for unbelief and impenitence, foreseen also.

2. That every individual is equally redeemed by Christ; though believers and good men only finally receive the benefit.

3. That true faith is only from the operation of the Holy Ghost, not from natural powers, or the self-wrought exertion of the human will; but that a general sufficiency of divine grace is given to all.

4. That the divine grace or power of the Holy Ghost, begins, and carries to perfection, all that is good in the creature; though the will of the impenitent does resist, and often renders the Spirit's operations ineffectual.

5. That real saints may fall from a state of grace; but this was at first rather expressed dubiously; and only afterwards asserted positively.

These are mentioned as the great points of difference from the Calvinistic divines; but it is said, that Episcopians, and the followers of Arminius, departed farther from them, into the Pelagian or Semi-pelagian system; and many of them certainly inclined to Socinianism. The doctrines stated above, were the avowed pillars of the Arminian creed; but their ideas respecting all confessions of faith were very lax; and they maintained, that as Christians were only responsible to God for their religious opinions, no other confession of faith was necessary, than the admission of the Scriptures to be the word of God.

Political differences in Holland ranged the different parties under opposite leaders. Maurice, Prince of Orange, and those who supported him, were opposed by Barneveldt, Grotius, and Hoogerbeets, men in the highest places of the republic, and jealous of Maurice, as aspiring after undue power and influence. Gomarus and his friends attached themselves to Maurice—the Arminians to Barneveldt and his associates. The party of Maurice prevailing, Barneveldt lost his head, and Grotius and Hoogerbeets were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The Arminians, though not exposed to suffer for their opinions as yet, were thus deprived of their former protectors and supporters, and were probably regarded with an evil eye by Maurice and the prevailing party of the republic, for the intrigues in which they were known to have engaged in support of their patrons.

(1618.) A national synod was demanded by the Calvinists, to judge the points in dispute. The States General issued their edicts for its assembling: and deputies from all the provinces of Holland were joined by their brethren, sent from the other eminent reformed churches of England, Switzerland, Hesse, Bremen, and the Palatinate, to de-

cide the matters in controversy. Episcopians, a man of high abilities and eloquence, was the head of the Arminian party, and appeared foremost to defend their opinions against the accusations of Gomarus and his associates: but the synod had hardly commenced its deliberations, before a dispute on the mode of proceeding, drove the Arminian party from the assembly. The Arminians insisted upon beginning with a refutation of the Calvinistic doctrines, especially that of reprobation; whilst the synod determined, that as the remonstrants were accused of departing from the reformed faith, they ought first to justify themselves by scriptural proof of their own opinions.

All means to persuade the Arminians to submit to this procedure having failed, they were banished the synod for their refusal; and retired with bitter abuse of the partiality with which, as they complained, they were treated. The synod, however, proceeded in their examination of the Arminian tenets, and as the Arminian doctors had left the assembly, their writings underwent a strict scrutiny in their absence: their opinions were condemned, and their persons excommunicated; whether justly or not, I shall not decide. But nothing can vindicate the rigour and asperity with which they were treated, and the unchristian persecution which followed, and drove these men from their churches and their country, into exile and poverty. Surely such are not the weapons of a christian's warfare. In the whole of this proceeding, ecclesiastical intolerance was made the instrument of political artifice, to crush the party of their adversaries. Whatever sanctity the one side or the other affected, they both proved themselves to be but men: and if the weak and oppressed were to be pitied, their perverseness, and the provocations they had given, left them equally inexcusable; as will appear evident to those who weigh impartially all the circumstances on both sides.

The neighbouring countries received the exiles with hospitality; but some of the most illustrious, as Voratius, and others, gave too much cause to their adversaries to justify their suspicions, by verging to the Socinian doctrines: whilst the differences among themselves, were nearly as great as with those from whom they had divided. Hardly any two of the Arminian chiefs explained their sentiments alike; some expressing in higher terms the doctrines of grace, and others sinking deep into the abysses of Pelagianism and Socinianism.

But the death of Maurice, their persecutor, opened a door for their return, under his less prejudiced successor; and they were admitted to free toleration and peaceable enjoyment of their opinions. And it is singular enough, that ever since, though the Dutch

church has maintained the profession of the reformed faith, the ministers and people have generally been verging to the Arminian doctrines; certainly the most congenial with human reasonings, and plausible in the mis-conceived ideas of charity and goodness. And though in Holland the professedly Arminian congregations are by no means numerous, the clergy of the establishment are said generally to rank on the latitudinarian side: whilst from thence the spread of the Arminian tenets, through all the neighbouring nations, has been prodigious: the generality in all protestant countries embrace them, and the far greater number without knowing it.

In their wide extended colonies, however, the established religion was still maintained; and Asia, Africa, and America, had received ministers of the reformed confession among them. But the state of spiritual matters was very low in all their settlements; as at home they had abundantly partaken of the general declension, having a name to live, yet being dead: though many and excellent men were found among them in the church, and with the sectaries from it of various kinds: of these I would just mention the Meenonites, who, after all their persecutions, found rest and quiet at last. Their former turbulence, and their refusing to swear allegiance to any government, rendered them everywhere suspected, and in many places cruelly treated. But time, and their own exemplary conduct, having opened the eyes of the nations, a greater spirit of candour and tolerance having grown up, and governments becoming sensible of the value of industrious subjects, whatever their faith might be, they were permitted to enjoy a common protection with the other sects, and sit under their vine and their fig-tree, and to be no more afraid. Their divisions among themselves, if not healed, were mitigated. The very rigid followers of Menno were few, the rest, except in the point of baptism coincided nearly with the reformed. They admitted three orders in their church, bishops or presbyters, who preside, and have the power of administering baptism and the communion. Teachers set apart for preaching and public worship, and deacons or deaconesses. All matters pass in a consistory, at which the bishop or presbyter presides. They and the teachers are chosen by suffrage, and set apart by imposition of hands. The English Anabaptists herein considerably differ, as they have only one rank of ministers.

FRANCE.

THE Protestants in France, from the time of Henry the Fourth's exaltation to the throne, formed a kind of republic within the

monarchy, by the privileges they had obtained; and the fortified places, as Rochelle, Sedan, and others, which were given them as securities for the uninterrupted enjoyment of their religious liberties. But treaties are feeble cords to bind the strong arms of power: and the violation of faith with heretics is sanctioned by the catholic's creed. The protestant leaders were too often ambitious men, and the enemies of the Hugonots always watched for an occasion to deprive them of those privileges which necessity only had extorted; nor was that occasion long wanting. Cardinal Richelieu, who perceived that his master was but the lord of half his kingdom, whilst the protestants held Rochelle, and could always call their brethren to their assistance, after hard struggles to subdue their independent spirit, besieged and took their capital (1628); which a variety of misfortunes prevented the succours promised by England, from relieving. Lying now wholly at the will of their enemies, whose tender mercies they had so often experienced to be cruel, the Protestants in France sunk very low under every oppression, and every violation of privileges which they had no longer power to maintain. The insidious cardinal, and the imperious monarch, united with the Jesuits for their extirpation; too intolerant to permit the protestant profession under his dominion. Every artifice and promise, joined with threats, and sufferings of various kinds, were first used to engage them to apostatize from the faith of their forefathers, which indeed too many did. And on those who were obstinate in adhering to the protestant religion, vengeance fell, and booted apostles dragooned them into compliance, or delivered them up to the bishops and clergy, who persecuted them with the most inveterate hatred and unrelenting cruelty. Multitudes fled their country, and sought an asylum in foreign lands; and others unable or unwilling to fly, endured all that malice could devise, and abused power inflict, to subdue them to the yoke, to break their spirit, or consume them by suffering.

(1685.) The edict of Nantz was now revoked: and that wicked and bigotted Lewis the Fourteenth, instigated by his Jesuits and clergy, merited virtue enough to cancel all his crimes, and procure the high approbation of the Roman see, by the murder and plunder of thousands of his protestant subjects, and compelling the rest to seek exile as a refuge. To add insult to cruelty, an edict commanded them without delay to return to the bosom of the church, whilst guards were stationed on the frontiers, to prevent the escape of those, who for conscience sake were willing to leave all behind them. Yet hundreds of thousands, by one means or other, found their way into the

neighbouring nations, where they were received with friendship and affection, as exiles, as persecuted, as brethren. They left their ungrateful country, weakened by such immense emigrations, and carried their industry and resentment to strengthen the hands of her enemies. Even many of the catholics condemned so gross a violation of the most solemn engagements; and all but the miserable bigots themselves considered the step impolitic as unjust. It must be confessed the protestants deserved the scourge, by the awful declensions evident among them. Some of their principal teachers had departed grievously from the reformed doctrines; and wished to bend to a nearer state of union with the idolatrous church, which they had renounced: and whilst the body of French protestants approached the Arminian tenets, and softened down their professions to the more palatable, universal, and comprehending system, Switzerland also adopted them; and Geneva, the cradle of the reformed churches before the end of the century, degenerated fast into the Arminian and Pelagian system; which we have seen naturally euding in our day in Socinianism and Deism.

The spirit of truth and godliness was not likely to flourish under such circumstances. The cause of the protestants in France was reduced very low: and those who remained, instead of brightening in the furnace of affliction, degenerated from the purity of the faith, as well as the spirituality of practice. The remaining protestantism was little more than an inveterate hatred of popery. Some gracious ministers remained, but few, and driven into corners; and though a remnant of the truly faithful was yet to be found, the days of youth were past, and grey hairs were upon them. They have lingered on declining to our days; whether times of refreshing shall again come to them from the presence of the Lord is in the womb of time, but not out of the prospect of hope.

(1655, 1686, 1696.) The poor Waldenses, still maintaining in their sequestered valleys the protestant doctrine, were hunted out by jesuitical malice, and cruelly treated by their popish Duke of Savoy: their utter extinction was threatened. The kind interposition of the English, Dutch, and Swiss governments, preserved a few. Scattered and peeled, reduced in numbers, and destitute of pastors, without some gracious revival, they seemed approaching their final dissolution.

As reduced nearly was the once flourishing church of the palatinate. Under a catholic elector, and a series of oppressions, it hardly maintained a name among the nations where it had been first in honour. Nor were the other reformed communities exempt from the general declension. Hesse and the rest

of the calvinistic churches in Germany, exhibited no specimens of such life and activity as evidenced a vigorous frame: settling like their neighbours into deadness of profession and formality of devotion.

Upon the whole, we may with grief lament the sad decay visible among all the reformed churches towards the expiration of the century. Great inroads made on the purity of the faith; a growing neglect of all holy ordinances; a grievous departure from the spirituality of a heavenly walk; and an almost utter extinction of zeal for promoting the salvation of men's souls; the ministry less evangelical, and the people lukewarm. I may add also a spirit of infidel philosophy arose, that tended to sap the vitals of revealed truth; whilst the growing immorality and dissipation produced a contempt of all strictness of religious profession, and stood ready to welcome the spreading poison of atheism, in order to remove the uneasy apprehensions of future responsibility. I wish I may be mistaken in my gloomy views of the period I am describing; and that thousands may have been found left in our Israel unnoticed and unknown, who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

POLAND, TRANSYLVANIA, HUNGARY.

THERE were still vast nations bearing the christian name, chiefly under governors of the Romish pale, where a great mixture of protestants and others were to be found, that classed neither with the Lutherans nor reformed. Of these, the Socinians were at the beginning of this century a considerable body in Poland and Transylvania: and from thence, as their head-quarters, dispatched missionaries to the other parts of Europe; but they proceeded in a line different from the other protestants; not affecting to lead the multitude by popular discourses, but to gain the great and literati by professing themselves the advocates for the noble powers of reason; calling it the all-sufficient guide to truth; and its uncontrolled exercise the dignity of human nature. Revelation itself before this becomes superfluous; and natural religion fully adequate to every purpose of salvation.

But the hopes entertained from these ingenious missionaries answered not the sanguine expectations of their fellows. A momentary prospect of success at Altorf vanished, and Sohner and his pupils were expelled. Nor did other places furnish a more promising harvest. Even their university at Racow was dissolved and dispersed by the diet of Poland, for an insult offered by some of the wild students to a crucifix: which so roused the wrath of the catholics, that the Socinians were in consequence banished the

kingdom. This edict was executed with the most unchristian severity.

(1658.) Dispersed and exiles, they fled into different countries, and after various efforts to obtain an establishment, were viewed by too suspicious an eye to gain any settled resting place. The denial of Christ's divinity was then regarded as a crime so blasphemous, as no christian state should tolerate: milder maxims have since prevailed: intolerance becomes not the advocates for truth and meekness.

But few communities of Socinians are known out of England, the colluvies of all sects and heresies. Here Biddle had a congregation under Cromwell, and Charles II. Nor hath there been wanting a succession of those who have maintained the leading features of the Socinian heresy, though not exactly agreed respecting the person of the Son of God. But all concur in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, denying the godhead of Christ, and renouncing all vicarious satisfaction from the sufferings of a Redeemer.

The Arians and Semi-arians were indeed more rife than the grosser but simpler Socinians; and many having received degrading opinions of Christ, rejected the Athanasian doctrine, and formed to themselves different modifications of deity subordinate. A system which, however much it prevailed, seems more irrational than the Unitarian or

Socinian. Can we conceive any intermediate step between the true God and no God.

The collegiants of the United Provinces appear to be a branch of Socinianism, as their wide extended communion admits all who acknowledge the divinity of the Scriptures, and are not grossly immoral. And every man is permitted to speak in their assembly, and even to oppose and argue, provided it be done with gentleness. As they have neither creeds nor consecrated teachers, their bond of union alone is voluntary association.

Madame Schurman, and the famed Bourignon, might be mentioned, ladies whose zeal and learning gave them importance; and their aspiration after perfection flattered spiritual pride and self-righteousness. The leading tenet of the latter, better unfolded by Poirer, a disciple, and man of genius, is, that all true christianity consists "in immediate communion with the Deity, by internal feeling and impulse;" approaching very nearly in its genius to the doctrine of Quakerism, and alike sprung from the same mystic stock: of which also among ourselves was the noted Joanna Lead, whose visions and predictions in that day collected a number of absurd and credulous disciples. Folly and credulity will never cease in every age to afford abundant converts to fanaticism, and to whatever comes with the stamp of extraordinary.

CENTURY XVIII.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH EXTERNALLY.

As we approach nearer our own times, the more difficult it will be found to speak with impartiality. Far from being able to assure my readers of my own. I confess the greatest suspicion of myself, knowing the deceitfulness of the heart, and the amazing difficulty to divest ourselves, whether of the prejudices of education, or the pride of having emancipated ourselves from them; not perceiving that we have only adopted a new prejudice for an old one. All therefore I can say, is, that I wish to know the truth, and to represent it without disguise; and I shall feel no shame in acknowledging involuntary error; be thankful for information; ready to receive rebuke; and more willing to correct my mistakes, than any kind friend or undeserved enemy may be to point them out.

I am only sorry, that I am not more completely and fully furnished for the task; but I shall endeavour to do my best, and hope for candour. In many particulars I shall speak what I do know, and testify what I have seen, for more than half the century.

As the western christian world was now divided into two great communions, those who adhered to the church of Rome, and those who acquired the name of protestants, by their departure from it, these will demand our consideration separately and distinctly. The one forming a body of vast and extended members under a visible head, resident in the ancient metropolis of the Roman empire, which her arts and politics continued to maintain, if not over the persons, yet more despotically over the souls of men. The other a body vast and extended also, but in numbers apparently inferior, and neither connected by members as homogeneous, nor under a visible chief. Yet solidly united in some fundamental princi-

plea, which formed a powerful though invisible bond of attraction, amidst all apparent differences of opinion, kept them in a state of determined aversion to popery; and placed them in a constant sphere of repulsion from any approach to this greater body. The tyranny of Rome, the idolatry and superstitions too glaring ever to be softened down into any point of contact, made the rent between them for ever irreparable, without some prodigious change in the sentiments and views of the one or of the other. In some particulars the balance vibrated unequally. In point of learning, as deep scholars, profound mathematicians and acute metaphysicians, as well as every other branch of literature, the perfect freedom allowed to inquiry of every kind, and the general thirst for knowledge, as well as its diffusion through all protestant countries, gave them vastly the preponderance in the scale. Not but that singular advances were made in the same studies in the catholic countries; and philosophy cultivated with the greatest ardour; but it was confined to a particular number of literati, not so generally diffused, and shackled by the dogmas of popery. It is amazing how much the reading the Scriptures in the mother-tongue of every protestant nation, and the freedom of discussion of every subject, has led all ranks of men to a very great proportionable superiority over papists in this respect. And what is more to be attended to, the first scholars, deepest in the philosophic school, among the Romanists, though they continued professionally to adhere to the religion of their country, yet sat very loose to any religion at all; doubted of every thing but mathematical demonstration; and therefore eyed the mysteries of the church to which they belonged with silent contempt, and sometimes ventured a sarcastic sneer, which manifested a very feeble faith in the established doctrines and practices.

On the other hand, though the purity of morals had suffered an equal declension in the different churches, in point of zeal for the propagation of their own opinions, a decided inclination of the balance was still on the side of popery. Not only the inveteracy of ancient habits, gave a strong impulse to all the monastic orders, who must live on the emoluments of superstition; but the society of Jesuits, instituted on purpose to support the sinking cause of Rome, particularly exerted themselves. They, indeed, displayed an unwearied activity, in any other cause, nobly exemplary. They stimulated the torpid zeal of Dominicans, Franciscans, and Capuchins; roused them for the conflict, and called them to share in the merit and glory of bringing back the heretical deserters to the fold again; or of enlarging the bounds of popish dominion in heathen and distant

lands. Whereas, the love of protestants was become lukewarm, nay, frozen up. Secure in their own enjoyments, they sat down in the pursuit of science, commerce or gain; and too unconcerned about their own souls, entertained very little anxiety about the souls of others. The ministers of the different communions watched over their own flocks, indeed, that no wolf might steal into the fold; but they too frequently slumbered and slept; and appeared more occupied about their temporal advantages, than the spiritual benefit of those entrusted to their care. Few had zeal to attempt conversions from popery, or to labour extensively. Besides, in the protestant churches, little or no provision being made for the particular purpose of extending the pale of evangelical truth, the papists had an unspeakable advantage. They maintained a host of missionaries in every protestant country, for making converts to Rome: always secretly at work, often openly, men of the most insinuating manners, trained up for this very object, in the wiles of controversy, to undermine the true faith, to place the popish opinions in the most favourable light, and to surprise the consciences of the ill-informed, the scrupulous, and the disturbed.

It may be added, farther, that the great weight of interest lay on the popish side. A thousand allurements and advantages were held out by zealous papists, in order to make converts, even to the lowest of their tenants and people around them, such as every protestant would have thought it a disgrace to employ; restrained by his principles from using other motives than argument and conviction on scriptural grounds. Nor did the idea of any meritorious service stimulate his efforts, whilst every papist gained a proportionate offset for all his own offences, and a fund of merit against the day of judgment, by every convert he could produce to popery, whatever were the means of conversion. Hence, not only in all the countries under popish governors, was every effort used with peculiar advantage to extend the dominion of Rome over the consciences of men; but in the protestant kingdoms continual inroads were made, and converts gained. Indeed it is surprising, considering all circumstances, that their numbers have been so few, and the success so inadequate to the craft and diligence which have been employed by these emissaries.

CHAPTER II

ON THE ROMISH CHURCH.

THE commencement of this century beheld the church of Rome apparently fixed upon

an immovable basis in Europe, stretching out her arms to the new world, and embracing both the Indies. By the strenuous efforts of her jesuitical physicians, her deadly wound appeared to be healed, and florid health restored to her countenance. But it was only the flush in the cheek of the hectic; the matter was secretly collecting in the vitals, and all the fearful consumptive symptoms which we now witness, were preparing; and this from a source little apprehended; from men of no weight in any state, living chiefly by their pens, and supporting themselves by the diffusion of writings, pregnant with the virus of infidel philosophy. To appearance the state of popery seemed most auspicious: the catholic interest rising high in the barometer of politics, and the catholic religion spreading openly, or secretly, through all the corners of the earth; but a deadly worm preyed on the flourishing gourd, which overshadowed the papal throne.

Rome, the centre of Italy, looked round with exultation upon all the countries, from the Alps to Calabria, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and other isles of the Mediterranean and Adriatic sea; and not a soul dared peep, or a tongue mutter heretical pravity. The inquisition and the priests had effectually laid the axe to the root of the tree, and left not a trace of protestantism remaining.

Spain and Portugal had exerted equal vigour, and Jesuits and Inquisitors ferreted out every lurking hole of heresy. Even the poor Jews were compelled to cross themselves, and with the more concentrated venom shut up in their hearts, to cover it with a greater zeal for superstition and the ceremonies of the church.

France, aspiring to universal monarchy, and menacing the nations around with servitude, had begun effectually at home, by the most flagitious acts of despotic violence towards the protestant heretics. The popish clergy and dragons supplied the place of inquisitors. Not a congregation remained of all the flourishing churches which once spread over the bosom of that vast country. Their worship interdicted, their marriages declared illegal, and oppression in every shape and form, weighing them into the dust of death. Though their numbers, especially in the south of France, were great, they were compelled to hide all profession of their religion. It was death for a protestant minister to exercise his functions, and imprisonment and confiscation at least, for those who attended or concealed him. The despotic Lewis the Fourteenth, with his Jesuit confessor and their crew, plotted night and day the utter extinction of the protestant name; and indeed had nearly effected it: and what is equally to be lamented, these sufferings of the protestants, though they increased

their abhorrence of popery, produced no spiritual change for the better; but for the worse. The peculiar doctrines of the reformed, had unhappily been debased from primitive purity, by an admixture of the Arminian leaven; and the conduct of the protestants in France displayed no such traits of spirituality, as manifested any striking improvement in moral excellence, or christian graces. Their souls lost the vigour of religion, as their persons became more enslaved by despotism. The amazing increase of popery in France is incalculable; from a third of the kingdom which had been enlightened, there were few men left, and those driven into holes and hiding-places: for when the suppression of all public worship is long continued; every means used to harass and oppress on the one hand, and to seduce and allure on the other; despair of help from without, and consciousness of inability to resist within, what can longer support the falling cause? humanly speaking, it must sink under the burden.

The sovereigns of the House of Austria, as bigotted as ever, seconded with their weight every wile of ecclesiastical and jesuitical missionaries: through all the extent of their dominions, they persecuted the profession of protestantism; and endeavoured to extinguish every latent spark. Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, the Low Countries, and all their other fiefs or dependencies, scarcely permitted a protestant to breathe the vital air.

The other countries of popery, among which the Palatinate, once so famous for protestantism, was now reckoned, used the same arts and oppressions; and often no help remained for the poor people, but to forsake the ungrateful land of their nativity, and seek an asylum among strangers; and even to transport themselves into the new world, in order to escape the malice of their persecutors.

And in the countries where papists and protestants were still mixed, and the same despotic proceedings were suspended by constitutional laws, treaties, or more commonly by political considerations, lest their neighbours should interfere and support the oppressed; still the weight of power, and the wiles of jesuitism and monkery, bore hard upon the consciences of men, and produced very lamentable effects in the perversion of many from the faith. Thus Poland, Hungary, Transylvania, suffered, and other countries in similar situations; and many converts to popery are said to have enlarged the Romish pale. Nor in the protestant countries themselves was this unobservable: and some sounded the alarm, though few lifted up the standard to resist the inroads of the enemy.

Britain, now risen to be the first among

the nations, held still in her bosom too many popish recusants, and enemies to the protestant faith. In some of her dominions, the catholics exceeded the protestants, four or five to one, as in Ireland. Numerous bodies remained in Scotland and England, which, though kept down by laws, too severe in many particulars, the lenity of the government scarcely ever put into execution, and connived at their transgression. Hence their worship, though forbidden, was maintained, it can hardly be said, secretly, as their houses of meeting were as well known as those of other dissenters; and the tolerating spirit universally diffused, not only protected them from insult, but embraced them with all the civilities of intercourse, and winked at the seductions which now and then appeared, through the secret machinations of their priests and emissaries. It must be acknowledged, that the balance was kept pretty nearly even, not so much by any conversions wrought through protestant efforts, as by interested motives; when the nobles, to possess an hereditary seat in Parliament; or the politic and ambitious to enter the House of Commons, or the Magistracy, from which, by the profession of popery they were excluded, renounced one religion to embrace the other; without being a whit more protestants afterwards, than they were papists before. And as infidelity had made so great a progress in all lands, it was not at all to be wondered, that men of no principle embraced that profession of religion, which most corresponded with their avarice or ambition. To these chiefly, in protestant countries were the conversions from popery to be traced.

The case was much the same in Holland and Switzerland. The northern protestants were either less annoyed with the horde of Jesuits, or more tenacious to suppress a religion which they feared and hated.

Yet the progress of popery in Europe, though great, bore a small proportion to the spread of it in distant lands. From Canada to Louisiana, the French had erected an empire that threatened the British colonies; and their numerous emissaries among the Indian tribes, had brought many of them to the name of christian, and to baptism; and, in order to make them surer tools for their grand monarch, had enlisted them under the banners of Rome.

But the vast foreign empires were those of Portugal and Spain, especially the latter, comprehending the whole continent of America on the Pacific Ocean, from north to south; at least from California to the extremities of Chili; and on the other side, all the immense regions that lie round the bay of Mexico, with the vast and numerous islands, besides the unknown boundless regions to the south. The Brazils, with their

dependencies, Portugal occupied: both nations were the obsequious votaries of Rome. With inquisitorial watchfulness, hosts of Jesuits and friars of every rank and colour, (this being the paradise of monkery) took care that not a spark of protestant pravity should ever enter their dominions; determined to maintain inviolate the devotion and profligacy, the ignorance and purity of the catholic faith, which distinguished these favoured lands. The vast Philippine Islands enjoyed the same advantages; and everywhere, negroes or Indians, slaves or free men, increased the number of Romish subjects.

China was now filled with missionaries and converts, and threatened almost to become christian; and in the East Indies, especially on the coasts of Malabar, and even to the gulf of Ormus, the zealous missionaries erected their cross, and enlisted a numerous host under their banners. Africa afforded gold and ivory, and slaves, and converts. The coasts of Mozambique, and those westward washed by the waves of the Atlantic, heard and received the disciples of Loyola. Indeed, they had strong inducements to quicken their diligence and extend their empire: for, besides the inestimable benefits of popery conferred upon these various colours of mankind, they contrived to make it answer to their own order, and to secure to themselves commercial advantages, from which one of their first objects was to exclude all their monkish rivals; and to be the princes as well as priests of those whom they had won to the profession of the popish faith.

I am obliged to cast only a rapid glance on these conquests that encircle the terrestrial globe; in all which, at the beginning of this century, popery had erected her dominion; and that principally by the means of her Jesuit missionaries. Whoever considers this extension of empire, will be ready to cry out, as it is written, "What city is like unto this great city!" and how natural was the elation of her pride, that said, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." But her day was coming, and to every true protestant it must be matter of exultation to trace the steps of her fall, and to see the image of jealousy smitten, by the stone hewn out of the mountain without hands. "Sing ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her."

Amidst all the apparent greatness and glory of Rome, various secret causes were working her dissolution.

The kings of the earth, though they gave their power to the beast, for purposes of their own ambition, yet in a variety of contests had learned the contemptibility of papal anathemas; and this peculiar benefit the

Reformation had generally produced, that the popish monarchs themselves had been less submissive, and more decisive, than in their several kingdoms, all interference with their governments became not the spiritual father; and therefore, whilst they continued to kiss the feet of the pontiff himself, and profess the most devoted reverence for his person, they made no scruple to despise the mandates issued by him, making a difference between the pope and the papal see.

The humiliating submissions of Rome, to the insolent monarch of France, we have seen. Naples, Sardinia, Portugal, Spain, all in their turns, wherever their regalities, privileges, and immunities, were trenching upon, clipped the wings of the dragon, and left him only the shadow of that power, which, before the Reformation, had been exercised without controul. Every dispute demonstrated the increasing feebleness of the papal arm, when opinion no longer supported the terror of his anathemas.

The inquisition in Spain and Portugal, became a state engine directed by government, and not an independent court controuled by foreign emissaries.

The sharp disputes which reigned between the members of the church, Jesuits and Dominicans, Jesuits and Jansenists, contributed greatly, by the writings on both sides, to open men's eyes, and to lead them to the exercise of their own understandings in the matters disputed; especially, they tended to bring into discredit, that body, of all others the most dangerous, because most servile to the Romish pontiffs. The jealousy of the monkish tribes, and all their weight and influence at Rome, backed the bitter accusations against the Jesuits, respecting their foreign missions. China, by these disputes, became subject to different decisions: sometimes the pontiff's mandates were obeyed, sometimes the Jesuits resisted. The issue was the expulsaion of all the missionaries, and the vanishing of all their churches, as the meteor of the night.

Their bitter persecution of the Jansenists awakened a return of enmity. Though their power prevailed at Rome, and with a bigot king, yet many who were disgusted with the bulls issued, looked to a future council, unable to procure present redress. Thus was there roused up a spirit of resentment against these jesuitical persecutors, that only waited the moment of vengeance (1713).

The famous book of Quesnel, which produced the bull "Unigenitus," so called from the word with which it begins, deserves a moment's attention, as probably to this eventually the fall of this society may be traced. Into this book were elegantly introduced the principles for which Jansenius had been already condemned: and the style was so pleasing, and the annotations on the

New Testament so spiritual and animated, that it was read with the greatest delight. It had reached Rome; and Renaudot, a French abbe, going on a visit to the pope, found him reading the new publication. "This," says he to the abbe, "is an excellent book. We have nobody at Rome capable of writing in this manner. I wish I could engage the author to reside here." The eagle eyes of the Jesuits had seen through the design of Quesnel, to give weight and consequence to their Jansenist enemies, whom they wished to crush. Their cries therefore of heresy surrounded the pontiff; and though the book was so excellent before, they insisted on his reading it again with Jesuit spectacles, and extracting from it, and condemning one hundred and one propositions as heretical, or of heretical tendency. This bull set the kingdom of France in a flame. A vast multitude had read and approved Father Quesnel: cardinals, bishops, and clergy innumerable, perceived in the work singular unction; and not viewing it through the same glasses, could discover nothing like heretical pravity in it. The protestants, by this bull, were convinced no abuse at Rome would ever be corrected; and the moderate papists, who were not Jansenists, were highly offended to see those doctrines of predestination and grace, so peremptorily condemned as heresy, which the fathers, St. Augustin, and the church, had been supposed to hold as orthodox.

The dispute was long and sharp in France. The Jesuits carried the day. It became the law of the land. You must subscribe the bull *Unigenitus*, or have no sacraments. Oppressions, banishments, excommunications, followed. The opposition made, and sometimes the means employed were, it must be confessed, highly discreditable to the Jansenist cause. They had better tempered weapons to defend themselves, than visions and miracles at the tomb of the Abbe Paris. These indeed they also wielded, and with effect. They laid open the moral system of the Jesuits, and stamped it with deserved infamy. They awakened the attention of the popish powers to their political conduct and designs. They charged them with erecting in Paraguay, an independent sovereignty; and under pretence of preserving their converts from the contaminating examples of Portuguese and Spaniards, of having excluded them from entering their missions. The mercantile transactions of this wily body excited the jealousy of the commercial world. Under the cloak of piety and conversions they endeavoured to monopolize the trade of the country, which they had reduced to their obedience. The gain of the merchant, as well as the authority of the monarch, thus trenching upon, raised an host of irritated and powerful opponents. Suspicious connections with those who attempted

to assassinate the King of Portugal; and open resistance to the Spanish and Portuguese forces on fixing the limits of their several settlements in South America, issued in their complete destruction. By a sudden and unexpected stroke, without consulting Rome, the catholic princes conspired their ruin, and they were all seized and banished in the same moment from Spain, Portugal, and France; brought home by ship loads from all the foreign dominions of these powers; and packed off for Rome their protectrice; but now unable longer to defend her jesuitical satellites. After a while the concurrent demands of the popish monarchs compelled the reluctant pontiff Gan-ginelli, to dissolve the society, lest jesuitical malice and revenge might issue in some destructive enterprise, unless crushed never to rise up again (1778).

With them the glory of Rome departed. The great barrier was broken down which held the consciences of men enslaved to the Roman see; and freer scope was given to the infidel philosophy to lift up its head with confidence, when it had these argu-
 es no longer watching the approaches to heresy.

Of all the causes which have contributed to the humiliation of Rome, none so effectually operated as the prevailing tenets of infidelity; which diffused themselves among all the literati, and most distinguished geniuses of the Romish church. The progress was silent but wide. The famous, or infamous Rousseau, D'Alembert, Helvetius, and that most agreeable but seductive and unprincipled writer, Voltaire, contributed to charge the mine and lay the train, which could not fail, with the first match kindled, to explode and overturn not only all the trumpery of popery, but to raise a spirit equally inimical to all despotic governments; nay, threatening an universal revolution in society, by the changes it was suited to produce both in religion and politics. Lord Chesterfield, a pupil of this school, when in France long ago, foresaw the inevitable consequences which we have witnessed. And what is singular enough, the wide spreadings of Arminianism, which infected the protestant countries, have begun even in them to give way to the more philosophical doctrine of necessity, leading to fatalism, and ending in Atheism. None gave greater weight to these opinions than Frederic the Great of Prussia, the patron and high-priest of infidelity: he contributed to spread it by his own writings and example, and to protect it by every encouragement. Though France was the fruitful source, Berlin was the focus where the scattered rays were collected, and where they beamed with peculiar lustre. The superior orders of the Romish clergy themselves having drank into this philoso-

phical spirit, made no vigorous efforts to suppress its progress, and little apprehended the fatal consequences to themselves, to which it was imperceptibly leading. The life of dissipation which prevailed also, in so fearful a manner, destructive of every precept of the gospel, prepared willing disciples for infidel principles. It was abundantly easier, and it must be confessed much more rational, to suppose that there was nothing after death, and so to quiet every uneasy apprehension, than to receive the absurdities of purgatory, and be at the pains of penance, or submit to the purchase of indulgences.

Moreover, the increase of knowledge in general guarded men from the pious frauds which had been such powerful engines of sacerdotal delusion. The priests themselves began to blush at their own tricks; and all the men of intelligence would cordially have wished to get rid of them; but they feared the people, whose credulity required imposition. So they wisely, in their ideas, tolerated the prevailing superstitions, to avoid what they regarded as the greater evil, the acknowledging papal fallibility, the loosening the pontifical dominion, and emboldening the prying eye of curiosity to look into its abuses.

Owing to these and a variety of other causes, the papal throne sunk in its revenues, as in its authority—little flowed into its coffers. One kingdom after another stopped the fatal drain, which had poured from every land into that gulf the wealth of nations, to be dissipated by nepotism, or a bastard progeny.

But above all other causes of the humiliation of papal domination, the most menacing and destructive have arisen from the ambitious rulers of France, who, under pretext of liberty, having seized the government, erected a tyranny more bloody and oppressive than that against which they revolted. After murdering their sovereign, plundering and degrading the nobles, levelling every distinction of rank, overturning every ancient establishment at home, abolishing the convents, shutting up the churches, banishing or murdering, with the most inhuman cruelty, all the ecclesiastics who refused to bow to their dictates, they burst as a torrent on the neighbouring nations, every where desolating the Romish church, and sweeping away its trumpery; melting down the silver saints and their shrines; casting the bells into cannon, and converting the churches and convents into barracks or work-shops. Thus suddenly all the immense wealth of the clergy dissolved as snow before the sun-beams. The whole ecclesiastical property seized, sold, and dissipated; religion was left to take care of itself. The bigotted country of the Netherlands has shared the same fate with Savoy, the sad scene of fer-

mer bloody persecutions: and still the gigantic ogre of revolution stalked on over the prostrate and trembling nations around, and all Christendom stood aghast whereunto this would grow. Germany dismembered, Switzerland subjugated, and all Italy plundered, from Milan to Naples, and crumbled into pieces, under the fleeting name of republics, and after the model and under the controul of their harsh step-mother: Kings hurled from their thrones, the Pope himself a prisoner, and Rome reduced to be an inconsiderable appendage, and subject to the vaunted Great Nation; whilst Spain trembling submits to become little better than a dependant province, and Portugal attempted to purchase a temporary respite, dreading to be swallowed up by the monster. Amidst these convulsions, expectation stretched out her neck, as if listening for the angel's voice, when he should cry, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen;" for it appeared highly probable that the time was come for the fulfilment of the prophetic word, "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great milestone, and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." A sudden reverse, in which nationally we cannot but rejoice, seems in its consequence for a moment to suspend the threatened destruction of popery. Whether the carved work which hath been broken down with these axes and hammers can be repaired, and the foundations which have been undermined, be propped up a little longer, only the spirit of prophecy can foretell. Every true protestant cannot but wish that God would hasten the period when the popish power shall fall never to rise up again, and the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.

Meantime it may not be unprofitable to pass in review the several popish countries, and the state of religion in each of them.

CHAPTER III.

ITALY.

ITALY, the chief region of papal empire, has been justly branded by one of our noble authors, as the seat of "illiberal vices," which walk by the side of superstition in the open front of day, and refuse to be ashamed.

Italy comprises,

I. NAPLES AND ITS DEPENDENCIES.

THESE, long held as fiefs of Rome, after undergoing a variety of changes, rested under a branch of the Bourbon Spanish family, and for some time have enjoyed indepen-

dence. Many disputes with Rome, were in general carried against the pontiffs, from whom at last they have emancipated themselves entirely, and pay no longer the former mark of feudal homage. In these countries not a spark of evangelical truth remains. They are sunk into the lowest dregs of popery. For some time past indeed they have begun to be initiated into the mysteries of modern philosophy, and dared to disbelieve. Many of the superior ranks of life, the nobles, the military, the literati, and the ecclesiastics, were nearly, if we believe Brydons's Travels, as infidel as himself.

A ridiculous scene, which a friend of mine witnessed, as he was visiting one of the beautiful churches of Naples, will give a pretty strong specimen of their religion. A woman opened a closet, and took out an image of the Virgin, after stripping off her old clothes she put on her a silk sacque, a hoop-petticoat, and very fine laced double ruffles. Presently several friars entered the church, and producing their books united in supplications around her. They rose from their knees, tapped their snuff-boxes, and talked and laughed together, whilst the woman unrobed the lady, and restored her to her former place, and her old clothes again. A protestant could not behold such worship without mingled pity and derision. In order to be fully ascertained respecting indulgences, he went to the office, and for two sequins he purchased a plenary remission of all sins, for himself, and any two other persons of his friends or relations, whose names he was empowered to insert, and who might be in need of so convenient a certificate for the porter of Paradise, St. Peter. That in the end of the enlightened eighteenth century, such folly can be propagated, is, to us who live far from the scenes of superstition, surprising; but countenanced there by priestcraft, general habit and education, the breath of suspicion dared not impeach the power of ghostly absolution: and shocking to relate, the first ecclesiastic of the kingdom was compelled to work annually the miraculous liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, or the populace would fancy some fatal calamity threatened the state. What the manners of such a country must be, are easily supposable. Thither those of our own retire, who, looked upon with horror for their unnatural crimes, need there no cover for their abominations, and are equally well received in all company.

II. ROME AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE.

THE states immediately under the Roman temporal dominion, still vast and fertile, were governed and plundered by ecclesiastics, who held all the first places of power and profit. The beautiful campaign of

Rome, indeed, once so abundant, is now become an unhealthy morass, where even to sleep a single night is dangerous: and the spectres, which necessity compels to abide there, seem all walking in their shrouds to the tomb. What the state of popery must be under those more immediately called to countenance every fraud of superstition is evident. Yet at Rome itself greater liberty was allowed them than either in Spain or Portugal; and even the Jews had an allotted quarter, where they lived protected by the government. I will not say that there was more need of courtezans at Rome than elsewhere, because of the thousands of dignified celebraries, cardinals, bishops, and others; but since they must be tolerated, the ghostly father prudently drew a revenue from prostitution, and licensed the stews. Perhaps in no catholic country, had infidelity made a greater progress than at Rome itself; but since by this craft they had their gain, it would have been the height of imprudence to rend the veil, for the populace to look into the sanctuary; and therefore, they wisely continued the tawdry mask of superstition over the face of impiety; and none bowed more lowly to the image, or performed their devotions with greater decency and propriety than those who laughed at their own absurdities. But though truth was thus fallen in the streets, and equity could not enter: the army of booted missionaries effected for a while the conversion of the people from superstitions, which Gallic warriors had learned to despise; and when such edifying examples were before the vulgar, and the same arms would raise them to equality with the proudest, the invitation was too tempting not to be acceded to, and the happy fraternization promised to be cordially embraced through all the countries of Italy. Naples was last drawn into the vortex. The strong band of power suppressed for a while the revolutionary movements which had manifested themselves, and only waited for the suspicious moment, when they might be displayed with effect: at last it came, and the monarch fled. The kingdom ravaged, plundered, exhausted, and but just recovered by a change as sudden as the revolution which had preceded, will not improbably be replunged into the same profligacy and superstition as before, and the blood of St. Januarius liquefy again in the warm hands of the archbishop.

III. THE UPPER REGIONS OF ITALY.

THESE first felt the ravages of Gallic arms. Milan, Venice, Piedmont, Genoa, Tuscany, fell successively before them. The church and its revenues afforded the richest plunder, and ecclesiastical magnificence faded before these disciples of the new philosophy,

the Goths and Vandals of the eighteenth century. For a considerable time before their irruption, the church indeed, almost throughout all the Italian states, had become an engine of politics; for though they professed obedience to the Roman pontiff, only so much respect was paid to his mandates, as consisted with their own sovereignty and interests. This was well known at Rome, and therefore, the popes had for a great while used only intrigue, to carry the points which they had no longer power to enforce. The thunders of excommunication had of late slept in the Vatican; and the mepases of authority given place to paternal admonition. But impotence once discovered provokes insult; and that in many instances the popes had been compelled to wink at, and watch for a happier moment to recover their former authority. They had parted with none of their claims, nor descended from their high supremacy over all persons ecclesiastical or civil, but having lost the power of executing their anathemas, and the pillars of their throne being no longer upheld by blind veneration, every asinine heel was insolently lifted up against the sick lion.

What will be the new order of things, and whither the rapid changes succeeding each other will lead, time must discover. The revenues of the church seem to have received an irrecoverable shock; and power and dignity are faded when not supported by wealth and opinion. The spread of infidelity and atheism is visible, the glimmering of gospel truth no where apparent. It was said at Milan, a protestant church was opened; but the protestants of such an army must be a spurious race, and can hardly leave any trace of truth behind them. War is always the parent of wickedness. Those who have been taught to despise the frauds of popery and its topperies, even when they return to its profession will be but half papists. The bands of veneration for superiors have been loosed on one side, and the dread of what is past will put a bridle on the more glaring abuses of authority for the future. Though a new pope should therefore be again enthroned and restored to his capital, the day of papal dominion seems to be past, and he would only shine as the sun shorn of his beams. It is not a day that gives hope of replenishing the coffers of ecclesiastics; and all false piety is sunk to so low an ebb, that monasteries will hardly ever more be founded, or scarcely repaired. The drones of the hive are driven out, and many of them killed by the winter's cold. It will not be easy to re-people the deserted cells—the rising generation have learned another lesson; and protestantism is not more inimical to monkey than infidelity.

Hence during the whole of this century no attempts have been made to pour forth new orders of monks upon the world. On the

contrary, interest and politics have led to the suppression of monasteries in all the various nations of popery. The life itself has lost all the foolish veneration once attached to it; these cells of celibataries have been for a long while filled with the daughters of those, who could make but a slender provision for them, the younger sons of numerous families, or of the peasants, who were ambitious of having an ecclesiastic among their relations.

The great preferments have long since ceased to be the meed of distinguished merit of any kind. They have followed the politics of courts; served the purposes of the prime ministers; or been bestowed on the relations of favourites, and those who could make interest with such as had the disposal of them. Hence less of the spirit of the order hath stimulated the sacerdotal tribe; and throughout Italy a multitude of men hath arisen high in science, and all attainments of human literature, such as Boscovitch, Beccaria, and others, who have perhaps unintentionally rent the veil of ignorance, the covering cast over all that people, and let in such a beam of day as hath tended to produce more accurate investigation, and consequently to detect the false principles, which custom had established, and thus radically to sap the veneration for opinions sanctified by long prescription. The ravages which have lately succeeded, and the partisans to democracy which have been gained, cannot but add weight to the descending scale. Rome may be rescued from its plunderers, and another pontiff enthroned, but the spirit which they have diffused, and the opinions which they have disseminated, will not be so easily eradicated; and probably prepare for farther changes. Happy! if truth and righteousness at last shall lift up their banners at Rome; and that gospel which Paul preached, and his beautiful eplstle contains, be again the language of her ministers, and the faith of her people.

SPAIN.

BEYOND the mountains, the papal power seemed even more inveterately established, than in the nearer subjects to the metropolis. During the reign of jesuitism, Spain and Portugal exhibited countries of servile obedience, and bigotted superstition; and they are still the last in the train of science, as well as truth. The disputes, indeed, about privileges and immunities, were terminated in their favour; but to need a dispute about national rights, which they should have admitted no foreign power to contest with them, bespoke the state of subjection in which they had been held. No appearance of evangelical doctrine hath hitherto in these lands dared to lift up its head. The inqui-

sition, though lately panned in its operations; was still ready to receive every denunciation, and suppress the first movements of heresy. The wiser and best informed, lamented the dreadful injury done to the kingdom of Spain; by expelling the most useful and industrious of its subjects. Olivedo, and other patriotic ministers, endeavoured to revive the torpid state of agriculture, by inviting some German protestants, with the promise of protection, to cultivate the desert lands of Sierra Morena: but this scheme was utterly frustrated, and himself brought before the inquisitors for heresy. A late intelligent traveller, who resided some time in Spain, and had the fullest opportunity to acquaint himself with the state of religion, and the manners of its inhabitants, assured me, that Spain appeared a hundred years in ignorance behind the other nations of Europe; but in dissipation far exceeded them. The cavaliere servente, now more agreeably occupies the place of the duenna. It would be a disgrace for a wife to be seen with her husband in public: even in his own house, he never presumes to intrude into the lady's apartment, when her cavaliere attends her toilette; indeed, he is himself employed in discharging that office with some other married female, without reproach, and without recrimination. Yet the offices of piety are performed with wondrous regularity. At mass the cavaliere servente attends his inamorata as a part of his duty; and a system is established, of impurity and religion, of devotion and profligacy, of which, bad as we are, we have no parallel. - Such a country, half overrun with French armies, and submitting, by an inglorious peace, to become the satellite of the new republic, cannot but be inoculated with their principles. The very state of their court, the manner in which the Duke of Alcudia, now the Prince of Peace, once a lifeguard-man, lives with the Queen; the imbecility of the King, and the despotic power of the favourite, all suggest the probability of changes, which even the rooted bigotry of the country will be unable to resist. It is said, very lately, that the inquisition it shut up, after having for a considerable while ceased to entertain the people with the pious spectacles of the *auto-de-fe*, or the solemn burning of those convicted of heretical pravity: and that now it is forbidden to proceed on any farther process. It had been for some time before under the check and controul of government. The old woman at Rome can no longer cover her babes of blood with her mantle of superstition. Her inquisitors are suppressed. Yet little knowledge or godliness have made their appearance. The new philosophy, as in other countries, has infected the literati; and all who are sent by the government to travel for improvement, are sure to carry home

with them a more than proportional share of infidelity, together with the knowledge and arts which they have acquired; and thus every day the foundations will probably be laid for the same changes as have marked her terrible neighbour.

PORTUGAL.

PORTUGAL, defended by our heretical arm, from the easy conquest it held out to her more potent neighbour, continued in the same state of mental and political languor and imbecility. Having contributed as much as any court to the expulsion of the Jesuits, and the extinction of their order, she has not yet risen above her long-rooted prejudices, and subjection to sacerdotal imposition. I am assured, that it is astonishing to see with what rooted aversion and abhorrence they behold us as heretics, though their defenders, and standing in the gap to prevent their being swallowed up by the Spaniards, their enemies. As a state, their feebleness is ready to leave them a prey to the first invader. As a church, no place affords a more dreary solitude than Portugal: nor have I heard, or read of any effort made, for ages past, to introduce a ray of evangelical truth among them. The scriptures are a book sealed, hid, and interdicted; gloomy superstition spreads her wings; ignorance, idolatry, profligacy, and cruelty, brood beneath them: not a reforming spirit dares murmur a doubt of the absurdest dogmas, or a suggestion to redress the most glaring sacerdotal abuses. Probably Portugal and her dependencies will be last among the nations reclaimed from ignorance, and emancipated from the servitude of popery.

FRANCE.

COMPARATIVELY, France has long been but half the subject of Rome: always contending for her Gallican liberties, though Jesuitical influence obtained great sacrifices: yet such was the discontent, and such the decisions of the clergy in this kingdom, that some occasion of fresh provocation only was wanting to have withdrawn them long since wholly from the Romish yoke. Nothing could speak this language stronger, than the proposal made by the famous Dupin, with other doctors of the Sorbonne, to our Archbishop Wake, for the union of the churches (1750); and though the matter proceeded not to any formal treaty, yet the preliminaries which were mentioned by the Gallic clergy, as matters concedable, shew that the project was disappointed more by court intrigues, and the fear of the prime minister, that wretch Dubois, losing his cardinal's hat, than from any aversion which the Gallican

church rulers seem to have had to set up for themselves.

Whether policy or candour contributed to the change, after the death of Lewis the Fourteenth, the protestants met with milder treatment in France; their meetings were connived at by the government; and where a malignant bishop would have put the laws in force against them, he was often withheld by the fear of displeasing his superiors: and thus without toleration, nay, in the face of the most tyrannical laws, they assembled, and often in great multitudes. I think a friend of mine, not many years ago, attended their preaching in a wood, not far from Nismes, where about ten thousand were supposed to be present, without the least interruption. This spirit of lenity had much increased after the destruction of the Jesuits; and a scheme of toleration was spoken of, and generally approved, before the late convulsions shook the state to its centre, and the church to the ground, and for a while destroying all worship, left every man to his own religion.

It is very natural, that the protestants, so long and grievously oppressed, should lend a cordial hand to a revolution, which must restore them to an equality with their fellow-citizens; and that their hatred of Rome should make them rejoice in her fall: and if I may believe the assurances of the emigrant priests, the Jansenists readily took the oaths to government, and the churches from whence they were expelled. In all my researches I have never been able, among the multitudes I conversed with, to meet one Jansenist emigrant priest, though I greatly desired it. Probably they were not sorry to see their oppressors humbled, however grieved they might be in the event, to behold all religion overturned.

As perfect toleration is said to be allowed to all who are careful not to interfere with government, I should hope some societies of real christians still edify one another, whilst they drop a tear over the miseries of their country, and sigh for peace.

The desolations wrought by republican principles, as well as arms, have been, as we have seen, the principal means of the destruction of the papal power among the nations which the French have overrun. In their own land the whole fabric of popery is levelled, and hardly nominal and constitutional bishops remain. Liberty is the only shrine professed to be frequented by Frenchmen; without perceiving the chains under which they groan, the slaves of corruption, and the tools of the ambitious. But God will bring good out of all the evil permitted, and a glorious church shall come forth, I trust and pray, from the furnace, when the dross of popery and superstition, and a worldly sanctuary shall be purged away "by

the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." It is said, that three million of persons professing protestantism still remain in France, though I should think their numbers exaggerated. How numerous the Jansenists may be, I am unacquainted; they would certainly welcome reformation. The amazing influx of foreign protestants, on a peace, cannot fail to be great: and if there be no dominant state religion, and a regular clergy maintained by the public; or at least, if free toleration be granted to all, I have, no doubt, the better half of the kingdom, whatever government may finally be established, will continue the profession of christianity under some form: and should even monarchy be restored with the hierarchy, the very state of the nation will probably require many modifications, and at least some such privileges as the edict of Nantes admitted. I am free to confess my apprehensions, that true evangelical religion will not as yet be generally that of France, or of any other country; I can only hope, that popery may cease to have the ascendant, though tolerated like the rest, and suffered to die a natural, and not a violent death. I am seeking the church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven; and I trust it will be found, "when the Lord writeth up the people, that this and that man were born there."

Nothing can be more desolate than the present state of the church in France; on the side of profession of godliness, scarcely any appears; if there be any real christianity remaining, it is concealed: the torrent still runs so strong against all religion. On the side of morals nothing can be more deplorable. A military government and its supporters, share the spoils of the crown, the nobles, and ecclesiastics; and spend with equal prodigality what they have acquired by means so unjust. The churches are deserted and shut up; new play-houses, and places of entertainment, are opened and crowded. Divorce is allowed on the most frivolous pretexts; and thus the sanctity of marriage destroyed: the dissolution of manners produces no shame, when countenanced by general practice and approbation. Republican virtue in France is very different from the stern, austere, and frugal manners of ancient Rome. They copy the luxurious Sybarites; and what they hold by a tenure, probably as precarious as unjust, they wish to employ in present enjoyment: a few, perhaps, providently lay up a hoard for an evil day. The general, established, and fashionable system evidently is, to live without God in the world, and eat and drink because to-morrow they die.

AUSTRIA.

AUSTRIA, always a bigotted adherent to

the Romish pontiff, during a great part of this century, beheld the sceptre swayed by a woman, who, though compelled to support her tottering authority, by protestant alliances, ceased not her servile subjection to ecclesiastical superstitions. She was a rigid catholic, and a devotee: but the spread of contagious infidel philosophy penetrated her court, and seized upon her successor. Unable, during her life-time, to take any steps, as she was too jealous of her authority to permit interposition, Joseph, her son, meditated designs to be executed the moment of her decease. Emulous of the fame of the great Frederic, the rival and plunderer of his house, he planned conquests over his Ottoman neighbours, and the spoil of the useless convents. His violent reforms convulsed his distant provinces. Having destroyed the barrier towns, and suppressed many of the religious houses, he ruined his own defences whilst he alienated the affections of his bigotted subjects. The spirit of revolt followed. Disappointment broke his spirits; his health suffered in his Turkish campaigns, and he fell the martyr to his own ambitious projects; leaving the Netherlands in a state of convulsion, preparative to all the miseries to which they have since been exposed.

Yet Rome severely suffered. The suppliant Pope visited the infidel Emperor, in hopes to obtain by entreaty, what he could no longer command by anathemas. He came too late: the day of his influence was passed with the mother. The son was a papist of a different religion; and chose to pursue his own purposes, very unconcerned about the interests of the church; so the old man returned as he came. I am not sure whether he left his benediction or his malediction behind him. To Joseph they would be exactly of the same import. But these things loosened the foundations of papal authority; despised, and without influence, the pope silently submitted, and Austria paid him only such respect as suited her own interest or inclination. Thus every where the bands of allegiance were broken; and if true religion found no protection, the pontiff sunk into contempt, though popery remained.

POLAND.

THIS great kingdom once subsisted, subject to the papal dominion. It hath ceased to be numbered among the nations. Poland, long the prey to ambitious competitors for an elective sovereignty, hath fallen into the claws of three eagles, that have divided the spoil between them. For this sovereignty, Augustus of Saxony, basely bartered his religion, and with the throne of Poland annexed to his hereditary dominions, hoped to transmit them together to his family. The popery remains—the throne is lost.

Are they ashamed to return again to the protestant pale, since their heads have ceased to wear a crown?

In the treaty of Oliva, guaranteed by the adjoining powers, the Poles admitted the toleration of dissidents of all denominations. The most numerous body of these was of the Greek church, though there were many of other communions, Lutherans, and reformed. Even the Jews in no small number found protection in Poland: but the dominant religion remained popish, always insolent, and often oppressive. Intestine divisions, bred by ambition, rent the land. A patriot king, labouring to enlarge the bounds of liberty, was unable to controul the spirit of Polish licentiousness. The intrigues of traitors to their country first ravaged the provinces, and then called in aid from those who only meant to carve for themselves. The inability to resist these intruding neighbours became evident, from the first partition of the country. The remainder rested not long an independent sovereignty. The three mighty monarchs of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, agreed to divide the whole between them for the good of the people, dethroned the worthy Poniatowski, and parcelled out his dominions according to their several conveniences and contiguity. An act the most unprincipled, the most atrocious, and such as never was committed by the most infamous robber which the gallows ever bore: but they were emperors and kings, and to suspect their justice, would be treason against their majesty. Religion could be no object of theirs; and so, eventually, the cause of God and truth was benefited by their ambition. Popery no longer possessed the power, or revenues, which could make it formidable. Each sovereign took what he liked, and only left such a provision for religious worship as his own liberality allowed. Toleration was a necessary consequence. A protestant and a Greek must prevent their subjects from the oppressions of popery; and a catholic monarch himself was compelled, politically, to afford the same indulgence, that he might not lose the protestants or Greeks, who could so easily have taken refuge with their neighbours and countrymen. Thus the earth helped the woman. No more money went to Rome—no more dominion could she exercise. They who had seized the lands, chose themselves to exercise the supremacy. Thus Poland became lost to Rome as a kingdom of its dependence; and the subjects, barring the national injustice committed, became certainly capable of enjoying more happiness and religious liberty than ever before. I am considering the real church of God as the desirable object, and as such, hope that much has been gained by the subjugation of Poland: and, that in the great system of true religion, this event may

be reckoned among those which are auspicious; as casting down the barriers of papal power and persecution, and opening a freer course for the word of God, where it may run and be glorified.

GERMANY.

THE princes and prelates of the popish communion, true to their principles, during a great part of this century, continued to oppress and harass their protestant subjects, and to compel numerous emigrations. Such were the poor Palatins, whom our hospitable land received; and the Saltsburghers, who found an asylum in Holland, and Prussia, and other countries around them. Will men, will those professing the name of christians, for ever bite and devour one another? Shall bigotry, blind to its own interest, glut its malice by murdering its best subjects? But remonstrance is vain, where popery, only intent on furious conversions, will hear no reply, but turn or burn. Yet, in the progress of years, a gentler spirit hath entered, the increase of knowledge, and the philosophic influence diffused, have rendered men more tolerant, if not more religious: they are become wiser, if not better; and for some time have ceased so bitterly to goad those whom it ought to have been their first care to cherish. Matters are, indeed, just now wonderfully embroiled; in the present sinking state of the church of Rome, it is more than probable, that Germany will see some of its catholic episcopats exchanged for temporal principalities; and not impossible but that the matters of religion may be put out of the question; and the bishoprics own subjection to protestant princes: and if this alteration of governors introduce a more general toleration, and the banishment of persecution for conscience sake, that is all which true religion seeks or wishes, and the church of Christ will be so far advantaged.

On the whole, from this review of the Romish church, and the particular members of which it is composed, I think it evidently appears, that the cause of God and truth has wonderfully advanced in the general scale of the nations, owing subjection to, or rather in union with, Rome. Her power is weakened, her riches dissipated, her subjects diminished, and her fall, I hope, approaching. When this desirable event shall be consummated, He only knows, who sitteth on the throne, rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE GREEK AND EASTERN CHURCHES

THE very little communication which subsists between Europe and the greater part

of the Ottoman empire, affords few materials for the history of the Greek church; which, sunk into servitude and oppression under the Ottoman yoke, and covered with ignorance, hardly lifts its head to observation. Yet, notwithstanding its inferiority, this body refuses to coalesce with Rome, and obstinately repulses all efforts of subjugation: nor has that all-grasping see been more successful with the Nestorians and Monophysites, who steadily maintain their independence, both of Rome and of Constantinople. In the humiliating circumstances of these christians, little efforts can be hoped, such as distinguished them formerly in the extension of the christian pale. Yet it must be noted, that the number of christians collectively under the Ottoman government is still immense; and though squeezed and drained by the Turkish bashaws, as indeed are all the other subjects, yet they are allowed the uninterrupted enjoyment of their religion and churches. And if you would judge by the proverb, "as merry as a Greek," which is said to be their natural disposition to this day, they contrive to bear their burdens without losing their vivacity. During the late commotions and furious attack of the Russians on the Turkish empire, they found cordial assistance from the Greeks in the Morea, who would have rejoiced to have seen their religion triumphant. And the same was said of the Copts in Egypt, that they wished to have welcomed them there; and had the famous Ali Bey been supported in his rebellion, the consequences to the Ottoman empire might have been more fatal: as it was, after many a disastrous conflict, and parting with vast provinces contiguous to Russia, as the price of peace, Greece and the Isles of the Archipelago, where the Russian fleet rode triumphant, were abandoned; the poor Greeks returned to the house of their prison, and their dream of halcyon days vanished. From all that can be collected of those whom war or curiosity have led to visit these regions, the state of religion among them is miserably low; reduced to superstitious forms and observances; and the papas or priests little better informed than the people.

In Egypt the same ignorance prevails, and the same depression; yet they have still churches and monasteries preserved inviolate. Their poverty probably is their best protection.

All attempts to carry the gospel into Abyssinia have failed, as we have mentioned; and the last embassy planned at Rome proved as ineffectual as all the former. Even the Moravian brethren, those indefatigable servants of the heathen, were unable to effect that design; and after abortive efforts, were compelled to return to Grand Cairo; from whence, by leave of the patriarch, they visit-

ed the Copts at Behrussa, and formed a small society, that was very hopeful: but the intestine divisions and conflicts in the year 1783, drove them from the country, and compelled their return to Europe.

One entertaining and adventurous traveller of our own, alone has penetrated the country, and returned to tell the story, as marvellous in many instances, as bearing authentic marks of truth. The motley christianity still practised among the Abyssinians, will hardly be admitted to deserve that appellation. As to any thing which has the semblance of spiritual religion, it seems unknown. Savage in manners, cruel, involved in perpetual contests, they scarcely maintain any profession worth the name of godliness, though abundant in superstition; and their jealousy of strangers is so great, and the danger of visiting them so imminent, that few will be ever tempted to tread in Bruce's steps. His medical skill procured him favour; and he claims to have accomplished the object of his journey, the discovery of the fountain-head of the Nile. Shall an object like that, however, engage such perseverance and zeal; and shall not the greater objects of the everlasting gospel awaken some adventurous spirits once more to tempt the dangers of the desert, and seek to revive the remembrance of him, who was early known, and obeyed even in Abyssinia? Surely yet there is hope.

In number of churches, Bruce says, no country can equal them. Every great man cancels his crimes by building one in his lifetime, or by leaving a sum for that purpose at his death: and every field of battle has an erection by the conqueror to celebrate his victory. The number of ecclesiastics is considerable, as may be supposed, and there are many monasteries, but the buildings are far from magnificent. The churches are thatched and round, and the summit a cone. They are supported on wooden pillars, with the roof projecting to form a covered walk. They are full of wretched pictures, but no image, nor any thing embossed is permitted within: circumcision and many other Jewish rites are in use among the Abyssinians. The sacrament is administered in both kinds; and the gospels read through once a year in the service. The superior is called Abuna; but their ignorance, bigotry, and superstition are equal to any part of the Greek church, and probably greater. The Romish missionaries have been so rudely treated, and the difficulty of penetrating the country is so great, that they will hardly attempt it again.

THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

ЕХИВІТІІІ an immense body, and the efforts which have been made to extend her bounds through Siberia to the sea of Okotsk and

Oonalska; and to the opposite coasts of America, have carried the Greek ceremonies to these vastly distant regions, as well as to the Tartars southward, and to the Samoëdes in the north. But this hath been done by the ambition of a Catherine, to extend her dominion, rather than with any missionary zeal to spread the knowledge of christianity. As yet the state of that country, however increasing in acquisitions of knowledge and civilization, affords no remarkable specimens, of which at least I am informed, of eminent religion. Their worship and ceremonies are full of superstition, and the mere performance of their ritual is all their devotion. The noted intemperance of priests and people speaks a very low state of religious practice. They are hardly yet emerging from barbarism, at a distance from the capitals; and not a little of their ancient paganism mingles with their christianity.

The Roskolniki formerly mentioned, or as they now call themselves the Staroverai, or believers according to the old faith, are a numerous body, especially in Siberia, among the Don Cossacks, and in many of the southern parts of Asia. With them Pugatscheff, who gave such an alarm to Catherine II. took refuge: and their past sufferings from the dominant church, and rooted aversion to the established hierarchy and ceremonies, led them to be his most zealous partizans. They have bishops and priests among them, who baptize and minister the communion, but as they have suffered so much, and are still persecuted, they are obliged as much as possible to conceal themselves. Of their discipline and principles, I have found no explicit account, though I should augur well of them, if the relation before me is to be depended upon, that the hordes of Cossacks are extremely bigotted to pure orthodoxy. I confess I have some suspicions; this may mean a very different idea from that affixed to it in the history of the church we have been describing. However, the courage of one of their priests named Toma deserves observation. He went to Moscow, and boldly preached against the invocation of saints. Being threatened by the clergy, his zeal fired him to take an axe, and entering a church, to hew in pieces the images of St. Alexius and the Virgin. He was seized and condemned, first to have his right hand consumed in the fire, and afterwards to be burnt alive. A sentence which he suffered with the most sedate fortitude, continuing in the flames to testify against the abuses of the dominant church.

In the Greek communion, the same bigotted hatred of all who differ from them appears as in the Romish, and the priests would gladly persecute, if the liberality and good sense of the different successive monarchs, and particularly of the last infamous

and infidel, though wise and politic woman, had not made it a maxim of government to tolerate all religions; and to invite into their vast, but thinly peopled dominions, persons of all denominations.

This hath eventually opened a door for the entrance of evangelical truth. Several settlements of German protestants have been established on the Wolga. A church of Moravian brethren hath been formed at Se-repta, near Astrachan, with a view to a mission among the Calmucks. Finding their attempts ineffectual, they have directed their attention to their German brethren, who were not very far distant from them, with happier auspices. By their means several evangelical Lutheran ministers have been settled among the colonists and societies formed of real christians, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, by their exemplary conversation.

A more successful effort hath also been made by these zealous brethren in Livonia, and the adjacent islands in the Baltic under the Russian government. Societies have there been established, in fellowship with the Moravians, and attended by them, though not separated from the Lutheran communion, but remaining under their own pastors; and these are said to amount to twenty thousand persons.

I hope more at large to detail in its place the labours and success of these faithful servants of our Saviour throughout the world. Though not joined with them in church order, and differing in some sentiments of religious truth, I feel myself bound from near forty years acquaintance with many of the brethren, to speak of those whom I have known, as men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and truly devoted to the work and service of our crucified Lord. I am perfectly convinced of the unfaithful reports of a Rimius, excluded from their society for immorality; as of a Warburton, a Lavings, and the translator of Mosheim, who have adopted the calumnies of so prejudiced an accuser.*

With peculiarities, perhaps some of them exceptional, yet admitting no such impure ideas as these men have imputed to them, the more the principles of the brethren are truly known, and the more intimately their lives are scrutinized, the more will they be acknowledged among the few faithful who follow the Lamb of God in the regeneration. The Russian church has led me into this digression; within those precincts I can find no object, on which I am able to dwell with

* I am informed that the impure and malignant note inserted by the translator of Mosheim against the brethren, in his ecclesiastical history, he would from conviction of its injustice have expunged: but the copy being shown to the author of the *serime* legend, the bishop engaged him to let it stand, and there it remains, a monument of the bitterness, bigotry, and falsehood of these accusers of the brethren.

such complacence as on the labours of the Moravian brethren. They seem to afford the only pleasing specimens of that spiritual christianity which is the subject of these inquiries. From the Greek church also the brethren derive their origin; though having revived from the lowest state of decay in the bosom of the Lutherans, and most corresponding in religious opinions, with the confession of Augsburg, with them they will most properly be classed, and come under consideration in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

THE treaty of Westphalia had placed the Lutheran cause on so solid a basis (1648), as could not easily be shaken. Peace and security produced a too common effect, declension. Their church continued in the profession of the same doctrines and established formularies; it used the same ceremonies, and nominally supported the same discipline; but awful departures from both, marked how much under the same name the reality of religion may be changed, without its being generally perceived. Offenders against morals were pretty nearly overlooked, and all the superior ranks in life raised above submission to any ecclesiastical censure. Nor were the ministers themselves very ready to give the faithful rebuke, much less to denounce the rebellious. Those who defied their pastors, and could defend themselves by wealth, influence and interest, had nothing to apprehend; and as Mosheim remarked, all ecclesiastical restraint of offenders lost its power, and they triumphed in impunity. The doctrine also professed and subscribed as from the beginning, underwent a very considerable change in the minds of the professors; among whom the progress of philosophy had been great; and who adopted the more fashionable, and misnamed rational divinity. The doctrines of free grace, of justification by faith alone, and predestination, required too much implicit credit, and too little mathematical demonstration, and metaphysical reasoning to suit the wise men of that day. The difference between Luther on the Galatians, and the sermons and expositions of modern Lutherans, pretty nearly resembled those of our own divines, compared with the thirty-nine articles, and the assembly's catechism.

The Pietists at Halle, with professor Francke at their head, continued to maintain much of the life of true religion among them, and some educated there, spread the savour of divine grace through different parts of Germany. They encountered much opposition from their bigotted, pharisaical or

philosophical heathens, and were exposed to much obloquy for their rigid maxims, and resolute rejection of all unballowed conformity to the manners and amusements of a wicked world. But as the century advanced the fervour of pietism abated, and iniquity abounding, the love of many waxed cold. The general body of the Lutheran church sunk into a Laodicean state, and all their zeal was expended on maintaining the forms and formula of Lutheranism instead of the spirit of christianity. Many ranked high as profound scholars, and indefatigable students, and were more distinguished by scientific attainments, than for vigorous efforts to preach and teach Jesus Christ. The infidel philosophy had too generally diffused its fatal misamata, and infected the mass of literati; the nobles, who looked down on the vulgar herd; the professors of law and physic; and the army, who prided themselves on their rejection of educational prejudices, and thought it a proof of superior attainment, to be wise above what was written.

This spreading contagion received especial activity under the patronage of the famous or infamous Frederic the Great, in infidelity. Other sovereigns were proud to resemble him; the men of the most atheistical cast became the admired oracles of the age. From this spaw crawled forth the new sects of Weishaupt and Kant, with their illaminés, avowing their object to exterminate the christian name and worship; and terrifying mankind with the monsters bred from this hebrinous race of philosophers and theosophists. Robison and Baruel have followed them into their lurking holes, and unveiled some of their mysteries and unarched designs to cover the earth with revolutions and bloodshed: not that I think so much of the mischief done is to be imputed to them, as these suppose. Allowing them all possible malignity, their power could not reach to the extent these authors have suggested; nor were many of the persons on whom Baruel pours out his vials of wrath deserving his censures. Too partial to his Jesuit friends, he would avenge their quarrel; and by endeavouring to prove too much, weakens the force of his own arguments. Montesquieu assuredly ranks on a very different line from Rousseau; and Necker and Turgot deserve not to be reckoned among the pests of mankind—but popery is popery still, under all its humiliations.

Yet the Lord had not forsaken the earth, nor left his truth without witnesses. Some preserved the purity of the faith amidst the too general apostacy. In different parts of Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, were found pastors after the great Shepherd's mind, who fed the flock of Christ with the sincere milk of the word. And though, as the century advanced, the light of truth grew more obscure,

and the cause of Christ seemed much to decay, of late, symptoms of happy revival have appeared in various parts, and the daring front of barefaced infidelity has roused the dormant zeal of many to lift up the standard of the cross against the floods of impiety.

Among those peculiarly distinguished for their christian zeal, one choice body of confessors of the evangelical doctrines has arisen in the bosom of the Lutheran church; and from small beginnings growing into eminence of excellence, claims a particular mention. No name of professing protestants in our day has displayed more fervent zeal for the Lamb of God, and the characteristic principles of christianity, as connected with his blood-shedding for us, than the Moravian brethren. Under a long series of persecution and oppression from the bigotry of popery, they had been reduced to the lowest ebb of misery, and the few scattered remnants of that name seemed fast approaching to utter extinction, when, from the dust of death, the Moravian church sprang, as the fabled phoenix from her ashes, and acquiring fresh splendour from the flames, went forth to call back their Lutheran brethren to the Augsburg confession, to the essential doctrines of revelation, and to a life of greater purity than was generally in vogue. They met, as will be the case with all who rise up to witness against a wicked world that its deeds are darkness, many an abuser: and if the charges laid against them were to be implicitly received, they would become objects of horror and aversion, instead of living witnesses for the christian doctrine. Happily they are now better known, and their enemies are found liars. Mistakes were magnified into crimes, and expressions ill understood, received an interpretation the very reverse of what the brethren intended; nor is it needful to vindicate peculiarities in their discipline, which have given the handle of abuse and ridicule to their maligners. It is sufficient to observe, that in the great fundamentals of christianity, they have displayed a zeal to promote the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, which hath produced the happiest effects, not only in Europe, but throughout the world. In their lives and conversations, those who have known them best, without having formed any union with them as a church, will acknowledge that they are not only blameless and harmless, but eminently exemplary. Let us give therefore honour where honour is due, and never suffer prejudice to misrepresent any denomination of our truly christian brethren, because they gather not with us.

The state of the Moravian church in the present century, forms a prominent feature in the happy revival of evangelical religion; and justly claims a niche in that temple of

the living God, which is the object of our present survey.

(1722). Dispersed, distressed, reduced to the lowest ebb, overwhelmed by the persecutions of popery in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, under the bigot Austrians, the church of the brethren, in the beginning of the century had nearly disappeared, and their light seemed ready to be put out in Israel: but few men were left, and they of little estimation in this world; and no where could they find rest or establishment. In this extremity, three or four poor families, under the spiritual superintendence of that venerable man of God, Christian David, migrated from Moravia into upper Lusatia, in search of some sequestered corner of the earth, where hid from popish persecution, they might worship God our Saviour in peace and purity. At the village of Berthelsdorff, belonging to the since well-known Count Zinzendorff, they met from his steward, Heist, an hospitable reception. The Count himself was at the court of Dresden; but, on being informed of the arrival of the emigrants, he gave orders to encourage them; they were assisted to build cottages for their families, and some uncultivated lands were allotted to them, which their industry soon rendered productive.

The count himself, with his relation Baron Watteville, had been educated at the university of Halle; and very early imbibed a happy tincture of the pietism long retained in that seminary. The manners of the refugees were so congenial with his own, as to engage his fostering affection: this drew others of the same fraternity to join their brethren; and a new village arose, called Hernbuth, the cradle of the reviving church of the Moravians, whose increase hath been since so blessed, and for which the heathen especially shall praise Him, who can produce the greatest effects by instruments the most apparently feeble and inadequate.

Under the patronage of Count Zinzendorff, and his worthy pastor, Rothe, the infant colony continued to prosper, and spread its branches through Germany, Denmark, Holland, England, and America. The Count himself, a zealous Lutheran, at first desired they would unite with the established church at Berthelsdorff: but the brethren preferred adherence to their ancient regimen. Finding himself unable to prevail with them, to recede from their own form of ecclesiastical government, he after much deliberation agreed, they should observe the Moravian ritual: and though he himself continued in communion with the Lutheran church to his dying day, he consented, with Baron Watteville, to be appointed to the presidency of their affairs, spiritual and temporal, in conjunction with the elders of the

congregation, as their council and associates.

The following sketch of the nature of the church order among the brethren, is all my limits can admit.

Supreme in all the unity of the brethren, is the general synod: consisting of deputies from all the congregations, with the bishops, and elders, the inspectors of churches, and certain laymen.

By this synod, the elders' conference is chosen, for the direction of all matters, during the intervals of the session of the synod: To this all are subject—bishops, elders, labourers, and every individual in close church union with the brethren.

The bishops are chosen by lot, out of a number proposed by the conference for the office. They claim no superiority, nor exercise any jurisdiction, but as empowered and directed by the elders' conference. They have no fixed diocese or district, but remove from place to place, as stationed or sent by the conference.

The peculiar office of bishops is to ordain bishops, elders, and labourers at home, and among the heathen; such as being approved by the elders' conference as candidates, are by the lot selected. These also preach, visit the congregations, regulate their affairs, and encourage the labourers, and all the holy brethren.

Deacons and deaconesses visit, attend, and care for the sick and poor of each congregation of the different sexes.

They have economies, or choir houses, where they live together in community. The single men, and single women, widows, and widowers apart, each under the superintendence of elderly persons of their own class. In these houses, every person who is able, and has not an independent support, labours in their own occupation, and contributes a stipulated sum for their maintenance. They live thus at a less expense and more comfortably, than they could have done separately; besides the singular advantages of mutual communion, and daily worship.

The children of each sex are educated with peculiar care, by brethren and sisters appointed for that service: their object is to preserve them from the corruption that is in the world, and to prevent as much as possible the knowledge of evil from ever reaching their eyes or ears. Trained up under discipline from their tenderest years, their subjection to their superiors and elders is singular, and appears particularly striking in their missions and marriages.

In the former, those who have offered themselves on the service, and are approved as candidates, wait their several calls, referring themselves entirely to the decision of the lot: and I believe never hesitate when that hath decided the place of their destination.

In marriage, they may only form a connexion with those of their own communion. The brother who marries out of the congregation is immediately cut off from church fellowship. Sometimes a sister, by express license from the elders' conference, is permitted to marry a person of approved piety, in another communion, yet still to join in their church ordinances as before.

A brother may make his own choice of a partner in the society; but as all intercourse between the different sexes is carefully avoided, very few opportunities of forming particular attachments are found, and they usually rather refer their choice to the church, than decide for themselves. And as the lot must be cast to sanction their union, each receives his partner as a divine appointment: and however strange this method may appear to those who consult only their passions or their interest, it is observable, that nowhere fewer unhappy marriages are found than among the brethren.

This frequent appeal to the lot, seems the peculiar characteristic of the Moravian church, and has furnished their adversaries with the objection, as if they supposed themselves, and meant to impress the idea upon others, of being under the immediate direction of God in all matters thus determined. I confess, I can see no scripture order or warrant to countenance such appeal, nor any such practice adopted in the apostles' days, or in the primitive church. The single instance, Acts i. 26. when the sacred college was to be filled up by one of the two persons chosen by the church for the office of apostle, is no precedent, nor sanctions any similar appeal to the lot.

But whilst I advert to the peculiarities of their discipline, I wish ever to keep in view, and hold up to the attention of all other churches, the characteristic Moravian excellence of missionary zeal.

I have before me the pleasing accounts lately published of the happy success of their labours in twenty-six different missions, besides a variety of attempts made in other places, and by providential hindrances defeated.

The Danish islands of St. Thomas, St. Jan, and St. Croix, have, by their ministry, received the light of the gospel, and that especially among the most pitiable and oppressed of human beings, the negro slaves—to them their labours have been singularly blessed.

In as abundant a manner also have their efforts been crowned with success in our English islands, Jamaica, Antigua, Nevis, Barbadoes, and St. Kitt's, where many thousands of our sable-coloured brethren have been called by their preaching and conversation to the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and worship God in spirit and in truth.

The Greenland and Labradore congregations afford objects of wonder, delight, and thankfulness. Even in these inhospitable climes, and amidst those savage manners, the power of changing grace becomes more eminently displayed—How precious is the name of Jesus from the lips of an Esquimaux?

The Arrowack Indians, and the negroes at Surinam and Berbice, have been collected into bodies of faithful people by the brethren's patience and perseverance.

Canada, and the United States of North America, furnish happy evidences of the powerful word of a crucified Jesus, among the wild and yellow wanderers in the forests, and boundless plains of that vast continent.

Even those esteemed the last of human beings, in brutishness and ignorance, the Hottentots, have felt the divine efficacy of the blood of the Lamb that was slain, and owned the crucified man on Calvary, for their God and Saviour; have been formed into christian societies, and upwards of seven hundred are said to be now worshipping him with their faithful pastors, at Bavians Cloof, near the Cape of Good Hope, and live under their tuition, and in their happy communion, believing to the saving of their souls.

In all these various regions, no less than an hundred and forty missionaries are now employed, besides the host who have counted not their lives dear unto themselves, and died in the arduous service. These in general support themselves; and the work, by the assiduous labour of their own hands, in their several arts and occupations; and, like the apostle Paul, toil night and day, that they may require nothing from the heathen, and have to give to him that needeth. By the persevering zeal of these men of God, upwards of twenty-three thousand of the most destitute of mankind, in different regions of the earth, are recovered from the power of Satan unto God, and now walk with him as dear children, adorning the doctrine of Jesus, by a conversation such as becometh godliness; and thousands departed in the faith, rest in his bosom.

I might mention their efforts to illumine the distant East, the Coast of Coromandel and the Nicobar Islands, with the light of the Son of righteousness: their attempts to penetrate into Abyssinia, to carry the gospel to Persia and Egypt, and to ascend the mountains of Caucasus; for to all these regions, and many others, hath love for immortal souls, and zeal for the Redeemer's glory, carried these indefatigable missionaries, and often have they earned the meed of highest approbation, where their labours have been least successful. Let their enemies hear and be confounded—these are epistles of commendation written by the spirit of the living God. Many, swayed by prejudice,

presume to condemn, what they have neither examined with candour, nor truly understood; let them produce any similar effects by their instrumentality, and then they may be entitled to attention. Till then, let shame stop the mouth of calumny, and such transcendent excellence claim the tribute of admiration, and be held in deserved honour.

How so small a body as the Moravian church is equal to such exertions, and capable of providing so many missionaries, and furnishing an expense so necessarily great, is surprising. The whole number of their members in Europe does not, if I am rightly informed, exceed twelve thousand brethren; of which, about three thousand are in Great Britain and Ireland; and these not in general the most opulent, or high in any mercantile line. But their liberality abounds, and it is no less pleasing to remark the support which their missions receive from the cordial affection of christian brethren in all denominations. The good providence of God continues to raise up for them new helpers, and to furnish annual supplies for the support of so noble an undertaking. Indeed, in such a cause, the mean shibboleth of party should be mentioned no more, and every real christian delight to help forward this great labour of love.

Their example also should provoke the jealousy of every christian church. They have demonstrated the practicability of establishing the everlasting gospel in regions the most dreary and inhospitable, and among nations the most rude and ferocious. And shall we not kindle into emulation? catch from them some spark of zeal, and awake to like vigorous exertions? A thousand openings court our entrance into lands vast, fertile, populous, genial, easy of access, where the inhabitants are mild, friendly, tractable, presenting every hopeful prospect of success, ready to welcome our labours of love: regarding us as beings of a superior order, and gently upbraiding us for our neglect of them. In how many places are the difficulties apparently less, and the advantages unspeakably greater than in these fields which our Moravian brethren have attempted to cultivate, and with such encouraging success? Have we less zeal, less wisdom, less patience, less perseverance than they? Let shame stimulate, if a sense of duty and love to the souls of men does not constrain us. Let us hear at last the dying groans of the distant heathen, crying, Come over and help us.

This revival of religion among the Moravians, hath not failed also to produce as happy effects at home as among the heathen. Many of their Lutheran and reformed brethren have greatly profited by their fraternal intercourse, without connecting themselves

in their church order. A spirit of more animated christianity has been revived, in Germany and its vicinity. They have formed a large association of ministers from the frozen hills of Norway, to the Carpathian mountains, who assemble annually at Hernhatt, in Lusatia; and those who cannot attend, communicate with their brethren by their correspondence. These all endeavour to strengthen each others hands in the work of the Lord, without distinction of Lutheran or Calvinist; to provoke one another to love, and greater devotedness to God our Saviour. They are growing into a host, and though not many in any one country, yet, when collected, form a glorious body of confessors, whose light cannot but shine before men, and whose zealous labours in their several parishes tend to revive true christianity.

It is one of the happiest features of the present day, and among the tokens for good to the Lutheran church, that there is still in the midst of it the unextinguished flame of real love to him who died for us and rose again. I doubt not, but these men of God meet with many a rebuff, and harsh censure from their more lukewarm brethren; but the religion of Jesus requires the stamp of peculiarity; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow him, will have no characteristic mark of discipleship.

Some other missionary efforts within the Lutheran pale, deserve mention. To the honour of the Danish government be it recorded, that they started among the first, and have been successful in this glorious career. Their ministers visited Greenland with the gospel; and their mission to the coast of Malabar commenced early in this century (1705). It hath been pursued with unwearied zeal, and God hath crowned the labours with singular tokens of his approbation. The English society for propagating the gospel, have greatly helped these missionary efforts of Danes and Germans. And oh that my own countrymen, with more devotedness offered themselves to the work! the harvest is truly plenteous; but the labourers are few. May the great Master thrust forth more labourers into the harvest!

The nations who maintain the Lutheran faith are the same as from the beginning of the Reformation. Various changes have happened in the several kingdoms, but none in their religious profession. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holstein, and all the coasts of the Baltic to the Vistula, chiefly continue within this pale. Saxony, with the other states, who first embraced this doctrine, hath steadfastly persevered in the same confession of faith to this day. Though it is not a little singular, that the two great pillars of Lutheranism originally, have both gone back to

the Romish church. The Elector of Saxony bartered his religion for the crown of Poland (1698), and the Prince of Hesse, not long ago, for other considerations. Yet this made no change in the government of their countries, which, though the head was apostate, preserved their faith inviolate. A power hardly known in the commencement of the century, has spread from Brandenburg his vast acquisitions on every side; and is become in Germany, nominally, the head of the protestant cause. In point of religion, it would be superfluous to say any thing of Frederick the Great or his successors; nevertheless, the monarch who extends and supports religious toleration on the broadest basis, whether heathen or philosopher, may be owned as the church's nursing father. The true church asks no support, but peace and tolerance.

Thus, departed as the body of the Lutheran church is from the tenets of their great reformer, and much as the declensions from the living power of religion are to be lamented; a precious seed is still preserved in the midst of her through all the lands of her communion. The word of God is in every hand. The formulary of doctrine and worship is sound, and only those to be blamed who depart from the purity of the one, and the spirituality of the other. A happy era we hope approaches—a great and evident revival of spiritual religion appears in many places, widely dispersed, and maintaining correspondence with each other, to quicken, comfort, and encourage each others hands and hearts in the work of the Lord. We rejoice in the prospect, and knowing that Christ is not divided, share their blessings as our own. We wish to be provoked to jealousy by their example, and to see the Lutheran church a praise in the earth.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE REFORMED CHURCH.

If we estimate the extent of the reformed church by the vastness of empire, and commercial settlements possessed by those who make profession of that faith, we shall see her spreading forth her arms to both the Indies, and embracing the habitable globe. Before the late unhappy contest with America, peopled chiefly by emigrants from England, christianity had spread its light and power, not merely through the provinces which border the Atlantic, but had penetrated deep into the interior recesses of that immense region; and some noble efforts had been made to communicate to the wandering Indians the knowledge of salvation. The vast island of Newfoundland

was colonized for the sake of the fishery; and the gospel has been since planted there, with some happy and increasing effect. Even the savage coast of Labrador, through the zeal of the Moravians, has received the light of the truth; and in the highest northern latitudes, England has established forts and factories, though I have never yet heard of any missionary labours at Hudson's Bay or its dependencies. Canada has added a new field. Though popery is still the dominant religion, the government is protestant, and an open door set for the gospel there to enter. Of the state of religion in all this vast northern continent, I shall speak hereafter, observing only, that amidst many declensions and revivals, much of the power of godliness yet remains; and some vigorous efforts have been made of late, through the zeal of different bodies, to rouse up a deeper sense of divine things in the minds of that vast nation, not yet well consolidated, though it is hoped, daily settling on a firmer basis. With toleration of all denominations, the reformed religion is that generally professed in North America, whether by episcopalians, presbyterians, or independants, and many others, of the various sects, which everywhere people that immense republic.

In the East, the extensive settlements and conquests of English and Dutch, have greatly reduced the Portuguese and popery; many vestiges of which remain in the Carnatic, and on the coast of Malabar. Yet it must be lamented, that so little efforts have been made by either of these powers, proportionate to their ability, and the greatness of their empire, to spread the knowledge of salvation through the countries of their obedience. What might not Holland have done from Batavia, and her immense extent of insular dominion? What from Ceylon? What from the Cape of Good Hope? What from innumerable other parts where Batavian arms have triumphed, and their conquests spread? Everywhere, indeed, in their capital cities and settlements, they have established their religion, and sent ministers to officiate; but I have not yet heard of any attempts to evangelize the natives, nor of a single missionary among an hundred thousand Chinese settled at Batavia. Commerce and gain seem to have engrossed their attention. Indeed, I am sorry to record, that they have rather frowned on missions, and instead of forwarding the labours of the good Moravians, both at the Cape and in America, have obstructed the work, and eyed with jealousy and aversion, the noble and disinterested labourers, who, for the sake of the poor heathen, have been willing to spend and be spent. They, as many others, are afraid, lest the knowledge of the liberty with which Christ hath made us free, should loosen the yoke of tyranny and

oppression, under which in general through the East the natives are held; at least this is generally made the pretext for opposition. Though nothing can be clearer, than that natives of our own religion, and attached to us by these most powerful bonds, must prove our best friends and auxiliaries: but bigotry is as blind, as commerce is jealous and rapacious.

The English extent of foreign empire is still more vast, and of late increasing to a magnitude rather terrifying. Bengal alone, with the settlements in the Carnatic, is said to comprise thirty millions of inhabitants; and in every province, town and purgannah, our power is absolute; and none to hinder any efforts of missionary labour. But throughout this empire, not only no vigorous efforts to make the gospel known have ever been attempted by the India Company, in whom the sovereignty is vested; but contrarywise, the attempts of others have in great measure been frowned upon, and every application of those whose zeal prompted them to the service, been rejected; though they merely requested permission to go, and only asked the common protection of government to all peaceable subjects.

It is well known that in Bengal, and all the vast provinces to the north; in every thing which regards christianity, the natives have been hitherto utterly neglected. Even the very few clergymen who have visited the capitals of our settlements in India, have been generally too infected with the epidemic rage of the country, to amass wealth, in order to return with it to Europe, an object utterly inconsistent with every thing divine, holy, and heavenly.

Two or three zealous Baptist ministers, affected with the deplorable state of the poor Hindoos, have lately passed unnoticed into the interior of the country, with a view of communicating to them the gospel of Christ. They are employed in an Indigo manufactory; and improve the Lord's day and their intervals of leisure, in conversing and discoursing with the natives, Mahometans, Bramins and others, on the subject of christianity: a considerable attention is paid to their ministry, and though no open converts have submitted to baptism, they report commencements sufficiently auspicious, to encourage perseverance and hope of happy success; but what especially must render their labours highly respectable in the sight of christians of all denominations, is their indefatigable industry, with the help of some Bramins and Pundits, to translate the Bible into the Bengalese tongue; and which is now about to be published in Bengal, and to be disseminated among the natives. God speed the glorious attempt! His word can never be read in vain.

In the Carnatic some light of the glorious

gospel of Christ, hath been long diffused by the zealous efforts of the Danish missionaries from Tranquebar; and a few faithful foreign Lutheran ministers, continue to labour with some success in the vicinity of Madras, and in the Tanjore country, supported chiefly by the Society for Propagating the Gospel in England. At the head of these is that aged and venerable servant of Christ, * Mr. Swartz, near forty years ago, I think, my friend and companion at Oxford; Mr. Gerické, Mr. Janiké, and one or two more, exhausted with labour, advanced in age, and going down to the grave, with little prospect of successors animated by the same spirit. They are incessant in soliciting fresh and more numerous assistants, but few hear their call, or fly to share the toils of missionary service. God seems to have given their preaching such success among the natives, as to render it no longer doubtful, that however strong the barrier which the Bramanic casts and national manners, and especially the sanctioned immoralities of the Gentoo, may have erected against the gospel of Christ, no obstacle is insurmountable to zeal and perseverance. If God will work, then none can let it. They must indeed be fearfully inexcusable who enter not in themselves, and those who were willing to enter, and devote their lives and substance to the service they hinder. Where a thousand missionaries would find more employment than their most zealous labours could fulfil, four or five aged Germans now see the dying embers, and scarcely keep the expiring flame alive.

The good Moravians, as I am informed, after abortive efforts to spread the gospel in the Nicobar Islands, and having no such prospects as encourage their stay in the Carnatic, are removing their labourers to Europe, to be employed in more promising fields of usefulness among the heathen.

In what remains of our western empire, especially the Leeward Islands, the black inhabitants, by which they are chiefly occupied, have lately engaged the attention of some faithful servants of Christ; and been considerably evangelized, not by the countenance of government, or the ministry established in the church, which is in a state of fearful neglect, but by the voluntary zeal of Moravians, and the Wesleyan Methodists. These have nobly devoted themselves to the service of their poor black enlaved brethren, whom no man cared for; and have succeeded in the call and conversion of many thousands to the faith and love of Jesus Christ. In this honourable service none have more distinguished their philanthropy and fidelity, than the Rev. Dr. Coke, a principal minister among the Methodists.

A new world hath lately been discovered and explored by British navigators. To one region of which we have already sent our unhappy convicts, and with them the everlasting gospel; for so hath God in his gracious providence ordained, that the first testimony borne in that land of darkness and the shadow of death should be by those faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Marsden. May their labours kindle a flame never to be extinguished! and many of their brethren offer themselves on this self-denying service!

A nobler attempt to evangelize the islands in the vast Pacific Ocean, hath recently been made by a society formed by ministers and others of all denominations, who agreeing to merge their several peculiarities in the one sacred name of Christian, have united without preference of churches or party, to send forth faithful men to preach and teach Jesus Christ among the heathen, and to know nothing but him crucified. By the liberal contributions of individuals, who have formed the Missionary Society, a sum of twelve or thirteen thousand pounds was expended in the purchase of a large vessel of three hundred tons, conveying thirty missionaries, with five sisters, wives to the brethren, and two little children; furnished with every thing needful for one or more settlements; and to secure them a favourable reception among the natives. The vessel was navigated by men of God, who had many of them embarked for love of the cause; and commanded by that able and singularly excellent man, Capt. Wilson, who had devoted his life and labours to the service freely; renouncing all reward, but that inestimable one, the conducting so glorious an undertaking. Their first object was to visit Otaheite, and the Society Islands, as most frequented and best known, and if an opening appeared, to leave there our married brethren, and the larger part of our younger labourers; to proceed to Tongataboo, and the Friendly Islands, and deposit a few brethren, to return to the Marquesas, and if there was a prospect of welcome and success, to make a beginning with too or three of our younger brethren: returning by Otaheite and Tongataboo, to see how our missionaries fared, and to ascertain their safety and hospitable reception among the heathen; proceeding thence to China, for a cargo of tea, in order to cover by the freight some portion of the expense necessarily incurred, by so long and circuitous a navigation.

The eminent success with which this attempt has been attended is before the public at large in the first Missionary Voyage, than which probably there never was another so singularly favourable. After a course of so many thousand miles, the whole body of missionaries was landed in the places of,

* This blessed labourer, I hear, has just entered into his rest.

their several destination, at Otaheite, at Tongataboo, and the Marquesas, in perfect health; and the ship returned by Canton, with a cargo of tea into the port of London, in about one and twenty months, and brought back every seaman in as good health as she had received them. Not an individual was lost in the passage, no disease ever visited the crew, nor was the least want of any comfort felt during the whole of the voyage. The name of Capt. Wilson, under whose conduct and care the service was accomplished, will descend with honour and remembrance to the latest posterity.

Encouraged by so promising a beginning, a second equipment was immediately begun, to strengthen the hands of those already settled, and to enlarge the work in other islands. Thirty-nine brethren and sisters, with seven children, cheerfully entered on the service. But it hath pleased God in his mysterious providence to disappoint our expectations, and to exercise our faith and patience. They were captured by a French privateer, as they were entering the harbour of Rio Janiero, and landed at Monte Video, in the Rio Plata. From the French and Spaniards they received the kindest treatment; and after unavailing efforts to repurchase their vessel and proceed, they were permitted to embark for Rio Janiero, and passing from thence to Lisbon, are, with the exception of three or four detained through indisposition, arrived once more among their friends and brethren in safety.

Whatever the final event may be of these endeavours to evangelize the heathen world, whether the great Head of the Church be pleased to crown our labours with success, or in his all-righteous dispensations to frustrate our hopes, the attempt is Christian, is glorious. It is now demonstrated that a mission to these distant and desirable lands is practicable, is easy, and the means within the power of individuals, if zeal for Christ, and love for the souls of men be not wanting. And surely no unforeseen difficulties with which we may have to struggle, or partial disappointments should discourage us from persevering in so great a design, but rather rouse the missionary brethren to renewed and more vigorous exertions.

Advices also from Port Jackson, at first produced more distress than even the capture of the *Duff* itself; till on the arrival of dispatches from the missionaries themselves, it is found that though some of them, alarmed with apprehensions for their wives, after they had lived a whole year without any insult or injury, had taken the opportunity of the departure of the *Nautilus*, which had touched at Otaheite, to remove to Port Jackson; seven brethren and one woman refused to quit their station, and we hope are happily labouring to advance the great object of

their mission. Nor are those who have departed without some prospect of being made more useful in the place, whether they have migrated, than if they had rested where they were placed. God's providential disposal are all wise, and his work will often be more effectually accomplished, by the steps which we regarded as injurious, and tending to the disappointment of the object we had in view. Perfectly sure the mission is of God, and under his peculiar care, we rest in his disposal as ordering all things well; and patiently wait, and quietly hope to see the completed salvation of our God. It is hoped that soon these faithful and devoted servants of the heathen will be visited and strengthened by men of a like mind, and the seed of eternal life take deeper root, and spread through all the isles of the Pacific Ocean.

These trials of faith abate nothing of our prospects of success, which were never more promising, and more loudly call upon us for active and speedy efforts to repair every loss, and increase our sphere of action. Nothing has happened in the smallest manner to lessen the desirableness of this labour of love, or the facility of its execution. We have given our brethren in the islands our solemn pledge that we will visit them: their claims upon us are stronger than ever, and as the ability of the society increases in all its resources, no doubt this will be among their first objects.

But they have not confined their views to one region of the heathen world, however great and promising. They have wished to embrace the habitable globe as far as their means shall be found adequate to their desires. Africa, the seat of servitude, the region of darkness, and the most unexplored of all the continents, has especially attracted the attentions of the society. Their first efforts were directed through the colony of Sierra Leone, to penetrate into the Fowlah country, and communicate the blessings of the gospel to the interior, through the medium of the surrounding nations. Efforts to this purpose had been made before by the Wesleyan methodists and the baptists, and failed rather from the insufficiency of the instruments, than the impracticability of the attempt. Undismayed by these unsuccessful attempts, the London Missionary Society, in conjunction with similar societies at Glasgow and Edinburgh, determined to send out six single brethren, two from each body to make a renewed effort to introduce the gospel there. The climate however has been found so unfavourable that this effort also has been, in consequence of death and indisposition, rendered abortive, and only two of the six missionaries remain labouring with acceptance in the colony, without any prospect of passing into the interior country.

A happier issue we trust will attend our mission to the Cape of Good Hope, and the country of the Caffres and Boshemen, which besides the advantage of a more genial climate, has commenced with more auspicious prospects; and for which the Lord seemed to have provided especially suitable instruments in Dr. Vanderkemp and his associates.

Dr. Vanderkemp was a Hollander, a man of talents, and improved understanding, about fifty. He had been bred a physician; had studied a considerable time at Edinburgh, as well as in his native universities; he spoke the English, French and Latin languages; but as is too common with the faculty, he had long embraced the fashionable philosophy, and held the tenets of deism. A singular affliction in his family, occasioned by the sudden death of his wife and child, attended by some very particular impressions of God's Spirit, engaged him more deeply and seriously to consider his ways, and review the foundations of his hope, than he had ever yet done. This led him to a careful repetition of the word of God, and the happy effect was a solid conviction of revealed truth, and real conversion of his heart to God our Saviour.

He resolved from henceforth to devote himself wholly to Christ, and to the service of men's souls, and his heart was particularly led out to desire to communicate the knowledge of salvation, to the poor heathen whom none had cared for. He was for some time in this state of mind without a determined object, till he read of the rise and progress of the London Missionary Society. He immediately communicated to them the desire of his soul to devote himself to the heathen. After proper inquiries into his character and abilities, his offer was embraced with great delight, and he was invited to England, where the interview issued in the most cordial welcome of his services. His native language fitting him peculiarly for the Cape of Good Hope and its vicinity, that was fixed as the place of his destination.

On his return to Holland, to settle his affairs, in order to embark in the missionary service, he took with him and circulated in Dutch, an address from the London Missionary Society to the faithful in his own country. This immediately produced the happiest effects. A society during his stay was formed at Rotterdam, on the same plan with our own. A correspondence opened, and our design was not only highly approved, but immediately seconded by the offer of a Dutch minister to accompany Dr. Vanderkemp, whose name was Kicherer; to these two of our own brethren were joined, and they embarked on one of our convict ships, the Hillsborough, to be conveyed to their appointed station.

The diligence, zeal, and intrepidity of our

brethren among the convicts, amidst the ravages of death and the jail fever, and the blessed effects of their labours on the living and the dying are before the public. They prove the power of the gospel on the most obdurate of mankind. We have just received the pleasing intelligence that on a visit to these miserable beings, after our brethren had been some time at the Cape, they found the spirit of prayer and seriousness still increasing among them; and in the midst of all their misery, they united to cry unto God for mercy. Our missionary brethren at Port Jackson, will be very providentially placed to cultivate every gracious impression which may remain on their minds at their arrival.

The blessing of the Lord on the labours of these missionaries at the Cape hath been as singular. They have appropriated four evenings in a week to the instruction of the slaves who attended them in great numbers, and respecting whom Dr. Vanderkemp expresses himself in the strongest terms of confidence, that they have been baptised with the Holy Ghost, though the regulations established, it seems, at the Cape, forbid them to be admitted to the christian rite of baptism, an obstruction which assuredly our humane and christian government will not fail, on application, to remove.

But the most pleasing trait attending this mission is the earnest application from the most savage of all the tribes, the Boshemen, to obtain one of our brethren to teach them the knowledge of the true God. Whilst they were deliberating on the subject, and had determined to decline the service, as likely to interfere with the Caffre mission, for which preparations had been made; three of the Boshemen chiefs themselves came to the Cape, and cleaving to our brethren, would not leave them, till one of them had promised to accompany them to the Boshemen nation, whither he has proceeded, we hope, with a companion from the Cape, or one of our Dutch brethren.

A Missionary Society instituted at the Cape, under the title of the South African Missionary Society, is the first fruits of our brethren's exertions, and of the address sent from the Missionary Society to the inhabitants at the Cape. Their commencement is most auspicious, and the subscription considerable, one lady having given fifteen thousand florins. It manifests that God's spirit is moving on the hearts of men, throughout the whole christian world, and that the long dormant spirit of zeal begins to be awakened to vigorous exertions, for the Redeemer's glory, and the salvation of the souls of men. All the preparations were ready for the journey of the missionaries to the Caffres and the Boshemen, when the last dispatch was sent: the government most kindly fa-

souring, and the farmers waiting with teams and oxen to convey the brethren to the places of their destination. May this small beginning, through the divine benediction, be followed with great increase! Never in our time did Africa seem to open a more promising door of entrance to the heathen. The missionary publications on this subject will be read with thankfulness and delight. We wished to visit our vast possessions in the East, and to carry the light of the gospel to the Mahomedan and Bramanic sects; but obstacles in our way, before noted, prevented our intentions. One man alone has been employed to gain information of the true state of things on the spot, and to instruct us whether there, or in any of the adjoining nations, such prospects open, as would encourage attempts to evangelize that region of the world. We have heard of his safe arrival.

One solitary labourer also has been dispatched to the little island of Twillingate, near Newfoundland, at the earnest request of the inhabitants, from whom we have received tidings of his welcome and commencement of labours.

These are the actual efforts which have been made, and still greater are in the intention of the society, for which adequate preparations are making. The Sandwich Islands, the Marquesas, and the Society Islands, were to have received a new body of missionaries without delay. The afflictive circumstances which have happened, may for a while retard the purposes of the society: but they continue vigorously active to repair the breach, and provide both persons and provision for the accomplishment of their original design. The heirs of glory are usually trained up in the school of adversity, and to those who have read the Acts of the Apostles, a series of sufferings and disappointments have been seen to issue in the final success of the gospel; fully persuaded that it is the Lord's work, we look up and go forward. Duty is ours—events are his.

It is a pleasing trait to remark, how cordial an interest the faithful brethren in all lands have taken in these feeble efforts of missionary labour: and how liberally some societies and individuals have transmitted their gifts to our treasury. Correspondents from Sweden, Berlin, Basil, Zurich, Rotterdam, Frankfort, East Friesland, Lusatia, New York, Connecticut, and other places, have conveyed to us their warmest and most affectionate wishes for our success; united with us in our stated seasons of prayer; and in several places formed associations to promote the same objects, and to provide the means for running the same race of missionary zeal. May He who hath the residue of the Spirit, pour it forth more abundantly upon us all!

Our transatlantic brethren profess to turn their attention particularly to the Indian nations, in the interior of that vast continent; and, indeed, a wide field opens from the Alleghany mountains to the shores of the north western coast, which will require their most vigorous efforts. Could we some day so far proceed as to ascend the Columbia river, and form a mission on its banks, it is not out of hope, that the sound should reach the interior and spread till the undulations on either side meet, and form one concert of praise. Is any thing impossible with God?

But whatever retardments may make the heart sick with hope deferred, or whatever difficulties obstruct the execution of the present efforts, in this or some succeeding generation, the work shall be done with efficacy: for the heathen are given to the Saviour for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession. Happy and honoured are those, whom he shall deign to employ as instruments in the accomplishment of his glorious designs!

I have collected the chief traits of the latest missionary labours thus summarily together, and highly thankful should I feel, if I shall be able to record the progress of a work so happily begun. No circumstance of the present day bears a more auspicious aspect on the erection and increase of the church of the living God. Indeed, in this eventful period, it is not a little reviving, amidst all the prevailing desolations and ungodliness around, to see the morning thus spread upon the mountains, and to hope for the rising glories of the sun of righteousness, to renew the face of the earth. The church of the reformed will, I believe, be the divine and favoured instrument in this service, when God the Spirit shall revive his work in the midst of the years; and I look especially to my native land for this service, persuaded that we are yet preserved to be the heralds of the everlasting gospel, unto the ends of the earth.

But I return from the other quarters of the globe to Europe, and the nations of the reformed religion there.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Among the chief of the nations, stands this long and greatly favoured isle, where, since the gospel was first preached among us, scarcely ever has there been a time, when it more ran and was glorified, than at the present. It is the joy of every faithful heart to look around, and amidst every dark and dreary prospect, to behold a mighty spirit stirred up, to make the name of Emmanuel known and glorified in the earth.

It must be acknowledged and deplored, for a great part of this century, that the same declensions from the purity of the faith,

and the power of spiritual religion, had marked the reformed, as well as the Lutheran church; and our own shared deeply in the general decay. Literature, indeed, never advanced to a higher summit. The commencement of this century has been called the Augustan age, when purity of style added the most perfect polish to deep erudition, as well as the belles lettres. A Newton, an Addison, need only be mentioned, out of a thousand others, whose works will be admired to the latest posterity; and afford the noblest specimens in the English language. I would conceal, if I could, names of a later date, a Hume, a Gibbon, because, with all their admitted attainments and excellence, their writings contain the concentrated virus of infidelity, couched under the most able faculties, and most engaging style. They are the enemies of my God, but his cross will prevail. This age has been singularly philosophic; big with discoveries in all the hidden recesses of nature; and as pregnant of every abomination. The pride of wisdom, and the rage of reasoning have summoned revelation to their unhallowed bar, and condemned it. Insensibility to God, and carelessness about a judgment to come, no longer believed or feared, have opened the flood-gates to ungodliness. Infidelity and scepticism, respecting an eternal world, have given importance to the present; and multitudes appear in haste to seize their portion, and to enjoy the gratifications of the beast, while they live, expecting, as the beast, to die. Hence dissipation of every kind has burst in as a flood; and though I know not that our morals are more openly vicious than formerly, the general departure from all religious principle is glaringly evident, in the universal neglect of all divine ordinances; hardly the decencies of religion or worship continue to be maintained.

In the commencement of this century, the church was chiefly governed and filled, by the latitudinarian divines; whose moral writings, however able and ingenious, rendered the peculiar doctrines of the gospel unfashionable: and as they had themselves drank deep into the Arminian tenets, I wonder not to hear the great Archbishop Tillotson declare of the Athanasian creed, that "he wished we were well rid of it." Such, indeed, was the general idea of the age, that it contained articles too trinitarian, too evangelical, and too uncharitable, according to their apprehensions of divine truth. Hence, though all our subscriptions were strongly Calvinistic, and, as Bishop Burnet owns, this is the true and natural sense of the church and its articles; yet they came to be called articles of peace; were to be interpreted with a considerable latitude; and, in short, admitted, in whatever sense men chose to receive them: a supposition so dis-

ingenuous, that, though countenanced by general concurrence, it can never alter the nature of the thing, or make it less false and hypocritical, however numerous the body of the heterodox and Arminian clergy, and however few the reformed, or Calvinistic. Nothing, indeed, can be farther from truth, than the representation made by Mosheim, that the reformed church in general, and the church of England in particular, "receives into its bosom Arminians and Calvinists, Supralapsarians, Sublapsarians, and Universalists, without adhering strictly to creeds and confessions." The very reverse is the case: the same original creeds and confessions remain unchanged; nor is it in the power of the church, or its ministers, to make the least alteration, without an act of parliament. They must be subscribed *ex animo*, and taken in no other sense expressly, than the literal and grammatical, according to the first institution; and whoever acts otherwise, betrays the rights of conscience to convenience. That this is frequently, nay, generally done, makes no alteration in the claims of the church, and only adds to the criminality, by the example of general depravity.

The concealment and neglect of the distinguishing peculiarities of christianity, as if their defenders themselves were afraid to produce them, gave especial boldness to the infidels; and as the tolerating genius of the times admitted an uncontrolled liberty of the press, it swarmed with publications of the most pernicious tendency, most congenial with the general corruption of manners, and at the same time most highly conducive to spread the prevailing impiety and profligacy. England, though not singular, ranks among the first in these productions. A Collins, a Tindal, a Morgan, and a Chubb, with the still farther advance in atheism, a Mandeville, a Toland, and a Woolston, improved upon the noble authors of the former age, and opened the doors of the temple of infidelity wider; as indeed was needful, to admit the crowd that sought to take shelter there, from the threatenings of revealed truth, and the uneasiness of a guilty conscience.

Through the moralists in the pulpit, and the deists in the press, Christianity was reduced to a very emaciated figure. Even the dissenters, who affected greater purity of religion, had drank deep into the general apostacy, and sunk into a worldly, careless spirit. The presbyterians, especially, diverged into the errors of Arianism; and as their ministers lost the life of religion in their own souls, their congregations dwindled, and easily entered the vortex of conformity, and got rid of disabilities for the magistracy, and a sort of reproach that repelled them from the circles of fashion. The Independents were few, and little attended to; though amongst

them the sounder doctrines were maintained, but in general too cold, and dead-hearted; and the Baptists hardly had a name. The Quakers, left to their silent meetings, were declining and forgotten; and the other sects sunk into insignificance.

The old distinction between high and low church was not yet abolished, though the latitudinarian doctrines, and the new bishops, who had the great weight in the scale, were far predominant; embraced all protestants as their brethren; admitted true churches might subsist without episcopacy; and therefore more cordially received the dissenters, and formed very kind friendships and correspondencies with the ingenious of every denomination. But there were bigots who regarded their brethren with abhorrence; supposed they had neither ministry, nor sacraments, and belonged to no church: schismatics, and in moral error. These particularly revived at the latter end of Queen Ann's reign, when the cry, that the church was in danger, was made a handle to bring in a tory ministry (1710); and that contemptible creature, Sacheverel, became of importance. The Queen, more partial to her popish brother, than to the distant Hanover family, and rather wishing the throne to descend to her own blood, encouraged the high church party, as always most friendly to popery; and had her life been prolonged, and the intrigues of the tory ministry successful, another popish King would have been intruded on the nation, and welcomed by the high church and non-jurors, always partial and attached to the exiled family, and necessarily so from their principles of indefeasible right and non-resistance—a gracious providence once more rescued the land from these traitorous designs. The infidel Bolingbroke, conscious of his correspondences, fled; and the famous Bishop Atterbury was impeached for his detected intrigues with James, the abdicated exile.

(1714.) With the House of Brunswick the liberty of the country stood confirmed; and all who dissented from the church, satisfied with a liberal toleration, approved themselves faithful friends to the new dynasty: for the distance of relation to the throne, made it an act of election, rather than hereditary succession: a kind of parliamentary grant to that House, as protestants, and nearest in blood; and as affording the happiest prospects of maintaining the liberties of the country. With this, all the high church party were greatly dissatisfied, and employed their utmost power and art to foment repeated rebellions against the House of Brunswick; but happily their machinations were defeated, and their rebellions quashed, with the punishment due to those who were found engaged in them. As the dissenters approved themselves strong

friends to government, they enjoyed favour; and being excluded from all lucrative preferment in the church, the prime minister wished to reward them for their loyalty; and by a retaining fee, preserve them steadfast. A considerable sum therefore was annually lodged with the heads of the great divisions, the Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Baptists, called, *regium donum*, the royal bounty, to be distributed among the more necessitous ministers of their several congregations (1730), according to the discretion of a number of principal ministers of these denominations, with whom this gift was entrusted, and by whom it is annually divided.

The rising prosperity of the nation, with increasing wealth and commerce, as these things usually do, tended to increase the corruption of the kingdom. And morals, though strongly inculcated, woefully decayed. A word, called patriotism, was supposed to contain all excellence, and therefore more affected than any thing beside; though, in fact, a greater solecism cannot be imagined, than an immoral patriot. Between contests for power, thirst for riches, and insatiable love of pleasure, the nation sunk down into corruption, and the church erected a feeble barrier against the fashionable pursuits. All its great preferments were bestowed to secure friends to administration: whatever prime minister prevailed, the prelatical bench looked up to their creator with devotion and assiduous attention. The life and power of godliness fell to a very low standard; and only here and there an individual cleaved to the faith once delivered to the saints, and dared to be singular.

(1729.) It was in this state of torpor and departure from truth and godliness, that at Oxford, one of our universities, a few, chiefly young men, began to feel the deplorable spiritual ignorance and corruption around them. They were conscious something ought to be done to revive a sense of religion in principle and practice, from the decay into which it was fallen: they were convinced men of God and ministers of the sanctuary, ought to lead very different lives from any thing they observed at college.

John and Charles Wesley, the first, and most distinguished leaders in this revival of evangelical truth, were brothers: the one fellow of Lincoln College, the other student of Christ-Church. Their father, a respectable clergyman at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, was of the high church party, and had educated his sons in his own principles. John, the eldest, took the lead, and at the first appeared vastly disposed to inculcate every rigorous mortification, far beyond the practices of that day, and sometimes approaching the penances of popery.

With these associated a number of other

students, whose minds were similarly affected. Mr. Ingham, Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Harvey, were afterwards particularly distinguished. They all entered into solemn engagements with each other, to lead a stricter life of holiness and self-denial than they had ever yet done, and to separate from every thing unbecoming their character, as christians or ministers. They agreed to meet frequently together at each other's rooms for prayer and reading the Scripture; to keep stated times of fasting, and to receive the communion every Lord's day: they visited the prisons and the sick; they sought out and relieved distressed objects; and by these and other particularities, attended by an uncommonly sanctimonious deportment, they rendered themselves very notorious in the university, and acquired the name of Methodists.

As they all set out with profession of strict adherence to the church of England, the distinguishing tenets of her articles and homilies were particularly enforced by them: and as this was utterly unlike the manner of preaching, which then chiefly obtained, they attracted very numerous audiences; and their lively manner of address, as well as the matter of their discourses, exceedingly struck the hearers with their novelty, as well as importance. They became still more popular, after their return from Georgia, whither zeal for the gospel had carried them. And nothing awakened greater attention to their preaching, than their quitting the universal habit of reading their sermons from a book, without any animation, and addressing extempore discourses to the congregations where they ministered.

The multitudes which followed them were much affected—a great and visible change was produced in the minds of many. The attention paid to these ministers, and the blessing evident on their labours, roused them to increasing vigorous exertions. They were always at their work, preaching wherever they could procure admittance into the churches; and not a little flattered by the popularity attending their ministrations. They must have been more than men, if they had not been so. Some wild-fire could hardly fail to mingle with the sacred flame—whilst the noise they raised by their preaching was inconceivable.

At first they appeared united in sentiment; but they had not long laboured, before it was evident they differed in the points which have occasioned so much dispute. Mr. Wesley, the father of Methodism, with his brother, and those of his opinion, leaned to the Arminian doctrine—strong against irrelative decrees, but firmly maintaining the fall and its consequences, the necessity of justification by faith alone, and the operations of the Holy Ghost, to produce all righteousness and true holiness: but they

taught withal the universality of Christ's redemption, and the offering of his body, alike for those who are lost, as for those who are saved: and in point of free-will they supposed, though still as a gift of grace, that every man had some powers of will within the sphere of his own exertion, which first led to conversion—that the benefits of Christ's redemption extended to those who had never heard of his name—that by improving the measure of light and grace within him, every man might be saved—but that no man could be sure of persevering in grace; and that, in possibility, notwithstanding what Christ hath done and suffered, all might reject the remedy provided, and perish eternally.

Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Harvey, and those who united with them in sentiment, held the articles of the church in the sense usually termed Calvinistic; and which an ingenious inquirer can hardly hesitate to confess was the sense of the compilers. Though in age Mr. Whitfield was younger than the Wesleys, in zeal and labours he had no superior; his amazing exertions are well known; and the effects of them were prodigious through the whole land. He confined not his ministry to England—Scotland enjoyed the benefit of his visits, and furnished innumerable evidences of the power with which he spoke: nor were his efforts restricted to Britain, but extended to America; whither the Mr. Wesleys had first led the way. I mean not to enter on a life so well drawn up by Dr. Gillies. Suffice it to observe, that by the labours of these indefatigable men, a flood of gospel light broke upon the nation. At first they were wholly confined to the church of England, as their attachment to it by education was strong: and had they been fixed in any settled station, they had not improbably lived and died, good men, useful men, but unnoticed and unknown—a series of providences had designed them for greater and more extensive usefulness. The churches growing unable to contain the crowds which flocked after them, Mr. Whitfield first, at Bristol (1739), resolved to visit and preach to the wild colliers in the wood, who had seldom attended any worship: and his signal success among them, encouraged his persevering efforts. On his return to London, he used the same means of field-preaching, at Kennington Common, and Moorfields, being now generally excluded from the churches to which he had himself somewhat contributed, by perhaps too severe animadversions on the clergy, as well as the envy and disgust that his singular popularity had occasioned.

Nor were Mr. John Westley and his brother Charles less zealously employed, but also took the field, and preached every where. The congregations under the canopy of heaven were prodigious: sometimes, indeed,

riotous and insulting, but in general solemn and attentive. By these labours multitudes were daily added to the church of such as should be saved.

Hitherto the principal leaders, though acting independent of each other, had maintained apparent fellowship; but the difference of their sentiments respecting the doctrines of predestination and grace, began to awaken unpleasant disputes, which were carried on sometimes with too much asperity. Yet the corruption of human nature, justification by faith alone, and the necessity of a divine change of heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost; these fundamental truths, both professed zealously to hold and teach; nor did the division which followed between them, retard the progress of the work. They parted; indeed, like Paul and Barnabas: but the extent of the sphere of their usefulness was thereby enlarged. Unable to supply the numberless places and congregations collected by their labours with a regularly ordained ministry, they each associated with themselves lay preachers, the best informed and qualified, whom they could find; and thus multiplied themselves over the face of the whole land. Their societies increased by thousands, and their ministry was blessed to the great revival of religion wherever they itinerated.

This immense body of Methodists, from the difference of the doctrines each maintained respecting the decrees of God, and free-will, necessarily divided into two separate communions, the Calvinistic and Arminian; both of them professed predilection to the church, and did not at all object to episcopal government as a church order; but necessitated, from the situation in which they were placed, to preserve the congregations which they had collected and formed into religious societies, the great leaders, Wesley and Whitfield, appointed for their spiritual edification, local and itinerant preachers, to confirm their faith, and increase their numbers: themselves continuing the apostolic plan of itinerancy, and visiting in rotation the churches which their ministry had raised. Men more laborious than those principal persons were, since the apostles' days will hardly be found. They repeatedly travelled over a space more than the circumference of the globe; wherever they moved, they were as a flame of fire, and left a train of evangelical light behind them. They were in preaching unwearied, two, three, and sometimes four times a-day; and this often in places many miles distant from each other; and notice having been previously given of their coming, thousands awaited and welcomed them, heard them with reverence, and received them as angels of God. Thus immense congregations were formed through all parts of the kingdom, especially in the

great manufacturing towns, among the tin-mines, and the collieries. The aggregate amount of auditors must have been several hundred thousand, as the preachers themselves, in Mr. Wesley's connection alone, in Europe and America, amounted, if I am rightly informed, at one time to about five hundred itinerant, and four thousand local preachers. All these continued occasionally to communicate with the church of England, their original source; though they more frequently held communions among themselves; and received the elements from those ministers of the church of England, who were in fellowship with the Methodists, or served among them. And on the whole they appeared to give a decided preference to the ordinance, as administered by the presbyters of the established church; but their modes of procedure being charged as irregular, they had every discouragement from the heads of the church, and no hope of a settlement in it. Hence having erected places of worship of their own, and being no bigots to church government, they by degrees became more seldom occasional communicants in their parish churches, and confined themselves to their own ministers and places of worship. Yet for a long while they were very reluctant to appear to separate from the church established, and to this day, I apprehend the great body is episcopalian; and prefer that mode of government in its ancient simplicity, to the presbyterian or independent model.

At the time the Methodists arose, all the various denominations of dissenters from the established church had suffered a great decline from evangelical principles and real godliness; and some much more than others, particularly the English presbyterians. But many being awakened and revived by the labours of the itinerant evangelists, especially those of Mr. Whitfield, a spirit of renewed godliness returned in several congregations, and their stated pastors were roused to greater zeal and activity. The dissenters of all denominations thus evidently profited by the flame originally kindled by the ministers bred in the established church. From their itinerant and most able helpers, decaying congregations invited pastors to settle over them; new life was thus infused into the torpid mass. A multitude of churches arose among them, where there had been none before. The independents especially profited hereby, as most of the newly formed societies preferred the congregational model to the presbyterian. Not that these pastors were such independents by education or principle, as to have any radical objections, at least many of them, to the forms or order of the established church, but being excluded by what was branded as Methodism, from any prospect of admittance into the ministry there, they readily consented to preside over the church-

es which called them to the pastoral office ; and thus also the Baptists as well as the Independents have greatly enlarged their pale by similar accessions.

These itinerant preachers were men of lively and popular talents, and though not bred in the schools of the prophets, were often endued with great eloquence. Some of the more learned among the dissenters regarded them indeed with a jealous eye, and felt mortified at the preference given to persons neither possessing the knowledge of languages, nor initiated into the mysteries of scientific literature ; but their numerous audiences bespoke the favour of the people. And without the advantages of an education for the ministry, they have not been destitute of excellent gifts for the use of edifying. They were in general men of good natural understanding, well read in the scriptures of their mother tongue, the chief book indeed which they studied. They were experimentally acquainted with the great and fundamental truths of religion ; they possessed a natural faculty of elocution, increased by the habit of frequent preaching. And what seemed infinitely superior to all the rest, they appeared deeply affected with the truths which they delivered ; and as exemplary in their walk and conversation, as laborious in the work of the ministry ; evidently delighting in the service, as their first and best wages.

Whilst these eminent revivers of evangelical truth, Messrs. Wesley and Whitfield, with their associates, were thus proceeding with increasing zeal in their several spheres of usefulness, the great Head of the Church was pleased to raise up another singular personage, who contributed exceedingly to enlarge the pale of what was called Methodism, and to strengthen the hands of those who laboured in the work of God our Saviour.

The noble and elect Lady Huntingdon, had lived in the highest circle of fashion ; by birth a daughter of the House of Shirley, by marriage united with the Earl of Huntingdon, both bearing the royal arms of England, as descendants from her ancient monarchs.

In very early infancy, when only nine years old, the sight of a corpse about her own age conveying to the grave, engaged her to attend the burial. There the first impressions of deep seriousness about an eternal world laid hold on her conscience : and with many tears, she cried earnestly to God on the spot, that whenever he should be pleased to take her away, he would deliver her from all her fears, and give her a happy departure. She often afterwards visited the grave, and always preserved a lively sense of the affecting scene.

Though no views of evangelical truth had hitherto opened on her mind, yet even during her juvenile days, she frequently re-

tired for prayer, to a particular closet where she could not be observed : and in all her little troubles found relief in pouring out her requests unto God. When she grew up, and was introduced into the world, she continued to pray that she might marry into a serious family. None kept up more of the ancient dignity and decency than the house of Huntingdon. With the head of that family she accordingly became united. Lady Betty and Lady Margaret Hastings, his lordship's sisters, were women of singular excellence.

In this high estate she maintained a peculiar seriousness of conduct. Though sometimes at court, and visiting in the higher circles, she took no pleasure in the fashionable follies of the great. In the country she was the lady bountiful among her neighbours and dependents ; and going still about to establish her own righteousness, she endeavoured by prayer and fasting, and abstinence, to commend herself to the favour of the most High and most Holy.

The zealous preachers, who had been branded with the name of Methodists, had now awakened great attention in the land. Lady Margaret Hastings happening to hear them, received the truth as it is in Jesus from their ministry ; and was some years after united with the excellent Mr. Ingham, one of the first labourers in this plenteous harvest. Conversing with Lady Margaret one day on this subject, Lady Huntingdon was exceedingly struck with a sentiment she uttered, " that since she had known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation, she had been as happy as an angel." To any such sensation of happiness Lady Huntingdon felt that she was as yet an utter stranger.

A dangerous illness having soon after this brought her to the brink of the grave, the fear of death fell terribly upon her, and her conscience was greatly distressed. Hereupon she meditated sending for Bishop Benson, of Gloucester, who had been Lord Huntingdon's tutor, to consult him, and unburden her mind. Just at that time the words of Lady Margaret returned strongly to her recollection, and she felt an earnest desire, renouncing every other hope, to cast herself wholly upon Christ for life and salvation. She instantly from her bed lifted up her heart to Jesus the Saviour, with this importunate prayer ; and immediately all her distress and fear were removed, and she was filled with peace and joy in believing. Her disorder from that moment took a favourable turn ; she was restored to perfect health, and what was better, to newness of life. She determined thenceforward to present herself to God, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which she was now convinced was her reasonable service.

On her recovery, she sent a kind message to the Messrs. Wealeys, who were then preaching in the neighbourhood, that she was one with them in heart, cordially wishing them good speed in the name of the Lord, and assuring them of her determined purpose of living for him, who had died for her.

The change thus suddenly wrought on her Ladyship, became observable to all, in the open confession she made of the faith once delivered to the saints, and in the zealous support she began to give to the work of God, amidst all the reproach with which it was attended.

To the noble circle in which Lady Huntingdon moved, such professions and conduct appeared wondrous strange; but she had set her face as a flint, and refused to be ashamed of Christ and his cross. There were not wanting indeed some who, under the guise of friendship, wished Lord Huntingdon to interpose his authority; but, however he differed from her Ladyship in sentiment, he continued to shew her the same affection and respect. He desired, however, she would oblige him, by conversing with Bishop Benson on the subject, to which she readily acquiesced.

The bishop was accordingly sent for, in order to reason with her Ladyship respecting her opinions and conduct. But she pressed him so hard with articles and homilies; and so plainly and faithfully urged upon him the awful responsibility of his station under the great Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, that his temper was ruffled; and he rose up in haste to depart, bitterly lamenting, that he had ever laid his hands on George Whitfield, to whom he imputed, though without cause, the change wrought in her Ladyship. She called him back: "My Lord," said she, "mark my words, when you come upon your dying bed, that will be one of the few ordinations you will reflect upon with complacence." It deserves remark, that Bishop Benson, on his dying bed, sent ten guineas to Mr. Whitfield, as a token of his favour and approbation, and begged to be remembered by him in his prayers.

I hope the present venerable Bishop of Worcester will not be displeased if I record a similar instance of his candour lately reported to me. As he preaches frequently, he had observed a poor man remarkably attentive, and made him some little presents. After a while he missed his humble auditor, and meeting him, said, "John, how is it that I do not see you in the aisle as usual?" John, with some hesitation, replied, "My Lord, I hope you will not be offended, and I will tell you the truth. I went the other day to hear the Methodists, and I understood their plain words so much better, that I have attended them ever since." The bi-

shop put his hand into his pocket, and gave him a guinea, with words to this effect, "God bless you, and go where you can receive the greatest profit to your soul."

I know no place more proper to preserve another anecdote, which I received from my excellent friend, the Rev. Mr. Talbot, of St. Giles, Reading. When Archbishop Secker was laid on his couch with a broken thigh, and sensible of his approaching end, my dear departed friend, who had lived in great intimacy with him, and received his preferment from him, visited him at Lambeth. Before they parted, "You will pray with me Talbot," said the archbishop. Mr. Talbot rose and went to look for a prayer book, "That is not what I want now," said the dying prelate, "kneel down by me, and pray for me in the way I know you are used to do." With which command my dear brother readily complied, and prayed earnestly from his heart for his dying friend, whom he saw no more.

Lady Huntingdon's heart was now truly engaged to God, and she resolved, to her best ability, to lay herself out to do good. The poor around her were the natural objects of her attention. These she bountifully relieved in their necessities, visited in sickness, conversed with, and led them to their knees, praying with them and for them. The late Prince of Wales, one day at court, asked a lady of fashion, Lady Charlotte E. where my Lady Huntingdon was, that she so seldom visited the circle. Lady Charlotte replied with a sneer, "I suppose praying with her beggars." The Prince shook his head, and said, "Lady Charlotte, when I am dying, I think I shall be happy to seize the skirt of Lady Huntingdon's mantle, to lift me up with her to Heaven."

During my Lord Huntingdon's life she warmly espoused the cause of God and truth, though her means of usefulness were necessarily circumscribed, and her family engagements occupied much of her time and attention. On his demise, she was left the entire management of her children, and of their fortunes, which she improved with the greatest fidelity. Become her own mistress, she resolved to devote herself wholly to the service of Christ, and the souls redeemed by his blood. Her zealous heart embraced cordially all whom she esteemed real christians, whatever their denomination or opinions might be, but being herself in sentiment more congenial with Mr. Whitfield, than the Mr. Wesleys, she favoured those especially who were the ministers of the Calvinistic persuasion, according to the literal sense of the articles of the church of England. And with an intention of giving them a greater scene of usefulness, she opened her house in Park-street, for the preaching of the gospel, supposing as a peeress of the realm, that she

had an indisputable right to employ as her family chaplains, those ministers of the church whom she patronized. On the week days her kitchen was filled with the poor of the flock, for whom she provided instruction; and on the Lord's day the great and noble were invited to spend the evening in her drawing-room, where Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Romaine, Mr. Jones, and other ministers of Christ, addressed to them faithfully all the words of this life, and were heard with apparently deep and serious attention.

Lady Huntingdon now became the open and avowed patroness of all the zealous ministers of Christ, especially of those who were suffering for the testimony of Jesus. Mr. Romaine, on his being turned out of St. George's Church, received particular tokens of her favour; and though till then unknown to her, I was honoured with her expressions of kindness and approbation, when, as yet a young man, I suffered such persecution from Bishop Hume, and the University of Oxford, and was so unjustly dispossessed of my cure in that city; without a charge, except that I endeavoured to fill it with the knowledge of the doctrine of my crucified Lord, which was construed as an intention of bringing this man's blood upon them. All the parties concerned in the these transactions are gone into their graves, and whilst I record them, I am ready to touch my last hour. I can with joy look forward to the day of my Lord; he knoweth the simplicity and godly sincerity with which I then acted.*

The limits to which I am restricted forbid my descending into a variety of particulars that I may advert to the subsequent steps taken by this venerable woman, more immediately and extensively to spread the knowledge of salvation, and to restore the desolations of that church, which is the great object of that history.

The illness of her younger son, which proved fatal, had led her to Brighthelmstone,

* On this occasion I waited on Archbishop Secker, at Lambeth, by whom I had been ordained, for redress against an act which appeared to us glaring oppression. He had, during his filling the see of Oxford, received many complaints against me, but always heard me with candour, and spoke to me with kindness. When I stated to him the situation in which I was placed, and begged I might be permitted to know, and answer any charges which were brought against me; and that, as he ordained me, and knew my sentiments fully before, he would not suffer me to be borne down by the abuse of power, and driven from my cure with ignominy; which could not but affect all my future prospects in life. "Sir," said he, "whilst I was your Bishop, I always protected you. I here are many complaints, that multitudes of the young students follow you, and that there were disturbances at your church: but whether you gave the offence, or they took it, I cannot take upon myself to determine. I am no longer your Bishop, and cannot interfere."

Bishop Hume, soon after translated to Salisbury, happened one day after dinner to be asked by Mr. Rogers, of Warminster, "Pray, my Lord, what was the real cause of all that noise made about Hawsell at Oxford?" The bishop, with some embarrassment, said, "Say nothing to me on that subject, it has given me the greatest uneasiness." I heard this from the person to whom Mr. Rogers mentioned it with pleasure: I hope the great Head of the Church forgave the injustice done to his servant.

for the sake of sea-bathing. There her active spirit having produced some awakening among the people, she erected a little chapel contiguous to her house, that the gospel might be preached to them. This was the first fruits of her great increase: it was enlarged, and that not sufficing to contain the congregation, it was a third time taken down and rebuilt. Many can say they were born there. The success attending this first effort encouraged greater. Bath, the resort of fashion, beheld an elegant and commodious place of worship raised by the same liberal hand. Oathall, Bretby, and various other places, received the gospel by her means. At first she confined herself to the ministers of the established church, as her preachers, many of whom obeyed her invitation, and laboured in the places where she resided: but her zeal enlarging with her success, and a great variety of persons throughout the kingdom begging her assistance, in London, and many of the most populous cities, she set up the standard of the gospel, and purchased, built, or hired, chapels vast and commodious, for the performance of divine service. As these multiplied exceedingly, through England, Ireland, and Wales, the ministers who had before laboured for her Ladyship, were unequal to the task; and some unwilling to move in a sphere so extensive, and which began to be branded as irregular, and to meet great opposition: yet many persevered in their cordial services, when summoned to the work, and were content to bear the cross. As the work greatly enlarged beyond her power to supply the chapels with regular ministers, Lady Huntingdon resolved to employ the same methods as Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield had pursued with so much success before. She invited laymen of piety and abilities, to exhort and keep up the congregations she had established.

In order to provide proper persons for the work, she now retired into Wales, where she erected a college for training up young men to the ministry. From thence she dispatched the requisite supplies for the increased congregations under her patronage; and as the calls were often urgent, her students were too frequently thrust forth into the harvest, before they had made any considerable proficiency in the languages, or sacred literature, in which it had been her intention they should be instructed. Few of them knew much more than their native tongue, yet being men of strong sense, and real devotedness to God, their ministry was very greatly blessed, and the accounts of their success animated her to greater exertions. They were itinerant—moved from congregation to congregation in a rotation established; and her correspondence with them to regulate and provide a constant supply, was

a labour to which her active spirit alone was equal.

Many of these sought a settlement, either in the church or among the dissenters, in preference to a life of itinerancy; and as they were under no bonds but those of choice, they often quitted her connection. I think not less than fifty are now labouring in the church, or among the dissenters, with benediction. Their places were always supplied, and others offered to fill the ranks, as death, or retirement from the service, thinned their numbers.

Though Lady Huntingdon devoted the whole of her substance to the gospel, yet it is not a little surprising, how her income sufficed for the immensity of expense in which she was necessarily involved. Her jointure was no more than twelve hundred pounds a-year; and only after the death of her son, a few years preceding her own, she received the addition of another thousand. She often involved herself in expenses for building chapels, which she found it burdensome to discharge. But the Lord brought her always honourably through her engagements, and provided a supply when her own was exhausted.

To the age of fourscore and upwards, she maintained all the vigour of youth; and though in her latter years the contraction of her throat reduced her almost wholly to a liquid diet, her spirits never seemed to fail her; and to the very last days of her life, her active mind was planning still greater and more extensive schemes of usefulness, for the universal spread of the gospel of Christ.

Lady Huntingdon was rather above the middle size. Her presence noble, and commanding respect; her address singularly engaging; her intelligence acute; her diligence indefatigable; and the constant labour of her thought and correspondence inconceivable. Never was creature apparently more dead to all self-indulgence, or more liberally disposed to supply the calls of the gospel. I believe, during the many years I was honoured with her friendship, she often possessed no more than the gown she wore. I have often said, she was one of the poor who lived on her own bounty; but her most distinguishing excellence was, the fervent zeal which always burned in her bosom, to make known the gospel of the grace of God: which no disappointments quenched, no labours slackened, no opposition discouraged, no progress of years abated; it flamed strongest in her latest moments. The world has seldom seen such a character—thousands and tens of thousands will have reason, living and dying, to bless her memory, as having been the happy instrument of bringing them out of darkness into marvellous light; and multitudes saved by her instrumentality, have

met her in the regions of glory, to rejoice together in the presence of God and of the Lamb.

But, it may be said, was she a perfect character? No. This is not the lot of mortals on this side the grave. When the moon walketh in her brightness, her shadows are most visible.

Lady Huntingdon was in her temper warm and sanguine—her predilections for some, and her prejudices against others, were sometimes too hastily adopted—and by these she was led to form conclusions not always correspondent with truth and wisdom.

The success attending her efforts, seemed to impress her mind with a persuasion, that a particular benediction would rest upon whomsoever she should send forth; and rendered her choice not always judicious: though seldom were there ever less offences in so extended a work.

She had so long directed the procedures of her connection, that she too seldom asked the advice of the judicious ministers who laboured with her; and bore not passive contradiction.

I am the historian of truth, as far as I know it. She needs no posthumous fame to blazon her worth; and she is past far beyond all human censure which can affect her. The great Head of the Church hath, I have full confidence, decided her character, pitied her infirmities, pardoned her iniquities, and welcomed her to glory, with well done, good and faithful servant."

At her death, Lady Huntingdon left her chapels to trustees and executors, for the continuance of the same plan; which they have pursued with some measure of the same disinterested zeal, and with increasing success. Not less than one hundred thousand persons continue to have the gospel preached to them, by their means. The same steps are pursued in England, Wales, and Ireland; and though the property left by her Ladyship for carrying on the work of God, was basely seized at her death by the Americans of Georgia and Carolina, where it lay; and her assets in England, her chapels excepted, were found not sufficient for her engagements; yet, however unable to recover her estates, all claims have been discharged; and the chapels, according to her

"I insert the following anecdotes, not unworthy preservation. The famous infidel, Lord Bolingbroke, in conference one day with her Ladyship, addressed her, "My Lady, when you please to command my pen, I shall be drawn in your service, and admitting the Bible to be true, I shall have little apprehension of maintaining the doctrines of predestination and grace, against all your revilers."

My Lord Huntingdon, her son, unhappily was a disciple of the infidel school, yet however opposite to her Ladyship in sentiments, he highly revered his venerable mother. A great prelate one day in conversation said, "I wish, my Lord, you would speak to Lady H. she has just erected a preaching place close to my palace wall." "Gladly," says his Lordship, "but will you do me the favour to inform me what to urge, for my mother really believes the Bible."

will, maintained with less incumbrances than at her decease.

The seminary in Wales ceased at her Ladyship's death, the lease being just expired, and no endowment left, her income dying with her; but a new college, on a plan more promising for literature, has been established at Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire, near London; and under the superintending care of trustees appointed for that purpose. A number of students have been already educated there, and many are gone forth, now preaching the gospel with much acceptance, from this seminary. It cannot, indeed, be supposed, that in the course of three or four years, the term allotted for their education, much scientific attainments can be made; yet we have the pleasure of finding by experience, that in this time diligently improved, a competent knowledge of the sacred languages may be obtained: and what is more important and desirable, by the constant exercise of speaking before the president, students, and others, a facility and propriety of address is acquired, highly desirable for them in their future ministrations. Into this seminary none are admitted, but after strict inquiry of their characters, and repeated examination into their christian experience, and natural abilities. They are required to bring recommendations, and authentic testimonials, from the ministers and others with whom they have been accustomed to worship. They are not received too young, nor much advanced in life; usually between the age of twenty and thirty. They are expected to give the most satisfactory account of their own real conversion to God, and of the reasons which engage them to devote themselves to the ministry. They must appear possessed of acute, or at least of promising faculties for improvement. And as the greatest attention is paid to their education, and the disposition with which they are admitted, secures the most unremitting application to study, their improvement hath been hitherto remarkably rapid, considering the necessity of beginning in most instances with the first rudiments of grammar in each of the languages.

This institution promises the greatest utility. The education and maintenance of the students is entirely free: and at the expiration of the term of their studies, when they have been examined, and judged fit to proceed to the ministry, they are under no restrictions, but may apply for admission into the established church, or any other denomination of christians. If Christ be but preached, the end of our seminary is answered.

Thus, among those who bear the name of Methodists, there are three distinct bodies, the features of which are very discriminating. Indeed, like the term Pietist, the

name of Methodist is often applied to serious persons, who have no connection immediately with the societies of Mr. Wesley or Mr. Whitfield, or the successors of Lady Huntingdon. But each of these, though denominated by the general name of Methodists, has a discipline and regulations peculiar to themselves: these I shall cursorily remark.

1. The body of Arminian Methodists, who derive their name and order from Mr. Wesley, pursue the plan laid down by him. During his life, such was his personal influence, that it rendered his recommendations the general rule of their society; so that all his people, throughout the British dominions, to which also America might be added, looked up to him as their president and director. His time was spent in one continued voyage or journey, visiting regularly every society in the vast circle of his connection, and usually preaching every day, and frequently twice or thrice. He accustomed all his congregations to his plan of itinerancy and a frequent change of ministers. A general conference annually fixed the stations of the preachers, and settled two or three within a certain district, round which they moved in the course of a fortnight or three weeks, generally preaching somewhere every evening, and holding societies for prayer and mutual exhortation. All who joined in these, contributed a small sum weekly for the support of the general work, which stewards appointed, regularly accounted for. By this a provision was made for the maintenance of the preachers, according to the number of their families, or occasional necessities. The profits arising from publications, circulated from a press of their own, very considerably increase this fund for the support of their cause. Sometimes the stay of the preachers in their rounds is continued for more than one year, but this is fixed at the general conference. The same steps have been pursued since Mr. Wesley's death: they admit no president, but a few of the most able preachers sway their deliberations. On the whole, considering the nature of such a body, united merely by voluntary association, it is amazing that more disputes and divisions have not arisen. Their zeal, their activity, and usefulness, continue undiminished. America, and the Leeward Islands have been greatly benefited by their labours, as well as the several parts of the British dominions in Europe; and the impulse given to this great machine, is continued in the same line of direction by those who sit in the annual conference. For some time past they have had an ordination among themselves, and now the people generally communicate with their own teachers: their connection with the established church is hereby greatly weakened; and it will probably issue in a complete separation, not from any aversion to episcopal government,

but from despair of procuring episcopal ordination for the pastors whom they have chosen.

2. The followers of Mr. Whitfield are, in the aggregate, a body nearly as numerous as the former, but not so compact and united. Their principles being Calvinistic, recommended them especially to the various denominations of dissenters, and to those of the reformed religion in Scotland and abroad. A great number of these joined Mr. Whitfield, as well as multitudes, who left the established church. These were formed into congregations in diverse places, who, though considering themselves as one body, have not the same union and interchange as the followers of Mr. Wesley. The first and principal of the churches, at Tottenham-court, observes the church ceremonials and liturgy, the others use in general free prayer. Yet these consider themselves not as distinct independent churches, but formed under a federal connection: and some of these have no stated pastor, but are supplied by a rotation of ministers. They have an ordination among themselves: and where there is a stationary ministry, they still hold connection with each other, and come up as invited or called upon to the greater congregations, for a fixed space, according to an appointed routine. All these places of worship are supported, not like Mr. Wesley's, by a general fund; but the expenses of the meeting, and salaries of ministers, are provided by the several congregations, and collected and expended in each by stewards chosen out of the principal people. The great chapels, in London, are managed by trustees, who were first appointed by Mr. Whitfield himself; and on their several demises, have most faithfully and disinterestedly devolved the trust on others; men hitherto above suspicion, and themselves the most liberal supporters of the cause entrusted to their care: and thus, so far from diminishing since Mr. Whitfield's death, the numbers who have joined them are vastly increased. These are every day growing more into bodies of real dissenters, and losing the attachment to the church, which was at first strongly preserved. Yet they continue very different from the independents, whom they most resemble, in a variety of particulars—respecting itinerancy, church government, change of ministers, and mutual and more open communion. These congregations are very numerous, and very seriously attended. No where is the life of godliness more apparently preserved. The lay preachers, however, are comparatively become few, the most having been ordained among themselves; and the body is not governed by a general conference, nor the work supported by a common stock; but each congregation provides for its own expenses. Some chapels around London

depend for their supplies of preachers to be furnished from the great bodies in the metropolis. The richer congregations are always ready to assist the poorer in building or enlarging places of worship, and in helping a recent and weaker society, till they become sufficiently numerous, and able to defray their own expenses.

3. As the countess of Huntingdon left all her numerous chapels in the hands of decesses, they pursue exactly the same method of procedure as she did. A number of ministers of the established church, and especially from Wales, where she long resided, continue to supply in rotation the larger chapels of her erection; and those who were her students in her college in Wales, or have since been educated at Cheshunt, with others approved and chosen for the work, are dispersed through great Britain and Ireland. All these ministers serve in succession; not depending upon the congregations in which they minister for their support, but on the trustees, under whose direction they move. Every congregation furnishes a stipulated maintenance to the minister during his residence among them, and his travelling expenses: but in no congregation do they remain as stated pastors, but expect a successor, as soon as the time affixed for their stay is completed. Not can any of the congregations dismiss the person resident, or procure a change, but by application to the trustees, such being the conditions on which they engage to supply them with a succession of ministers. If any minister is peculiarly useful, and request is made that his stay may be prolonged, it is usually complied with; nay, sometimes at the desire of the people he is allowed to settle among them, liable however to a call of two or three months annually, to be employed in the work at large. And if any minister is not acceptable, or his ministry beneficial, his stay is shortened, and he is removed to another station. Two rules are established and known: (1.) That if any person leaves the connection, to which he has no tie, but choice, he is admitted into it no more; though the trustees as cordially rejoice in his usefulness in another denomination of christians, as in their own. (2.) It is also constantly enforced, that if any man departs from the Calvinistic articles of the church of England, or incurs reproach by any accusation of immorality, he is summoned to exculpate himself before the trustees, and heard with all candour; but if the fact be established, he is dismissed, without any possibility of being ever again admitted to minister in any of their congregations. The bent of these congregations is strongly to the established church. Her liturgy is used in public worship in all the principal chapels. Ministers of the establishment, such is the lenity of the times, serve without

interruption. Indeed, all persecution for religious differences is become so opposite to the spirit of the nation, that these things usually pass without censure. Probably the bishops themselves wish not to alienate large bodies of the most active and exemplary Christians, farther from the church, by useless irritation.

It is observable, that all these great bodies, though driven to worship in places of their own erection, in order to secure the preaching of such evangelical principles, as they cannot find in the churches in general, would be happy to have the cause removed, that hath compelled them to these expedients: and were the bishops and clergy zealous to inculcate the great fundamentals of gospel truth, and to adorn the doctrine by a life of spiritual religion, the greater part of these partial seceders would probably return to the forms and worship of the established church. As it is, their numbers every day increase; and whilst carelessness and lukewarmness cause the noblest edifices to be deserted, every little meeting is crowded with hearers, wherever a minister, earnest and evangelical, labours from his heart, for the salvation of men's souls.*

Such has been the progress of what is called Methodism in the greater bodies, that more immediately bear that name: but it hath spread in a prodigious manner, both among those of the church as well as the dissenters from it; and has been the means of rekindling the zeal of very many, so as to produce a vast alteration for the better in the conduct of thousands and ten thousands. Predilection for the establishment, strongly attaches many to it, who have received their religious impressions from one or other of these Methodist societies, or from some of their own clergy, who lie under the imputation of being Methodistically inclined, that is, such as literally and with apparent zeal inculcate the doctrinal articles they have subscribed, and live in a state of greater piety

* An awful proof of this I very lately received from a clergyman, on whose veracity I can fully depend. He had preached in the morning, where the lecturer of one of the noblest churches in the heart of the city of London read prayers, and being indisposed, he expressed a wish, that he could get his lecture-hour supplied that afternoon. My friend humanely offered his services, and the lecturer begged him to be punctual at three. After a walk of two miles, he entered the church a few minutes before the time, and was surprised not to perceive an individual in the church, except the boy who was tolling the bell with the surplice on his arm. He went into the vestry, and was but just at down, when a man in black opened the door, and walking up addressed him with a very consequential air—"Pray, sir, who may you be?" "Who am I?—such a one—and come to preach for your lecturer this afternoon." "There was nobody here last Sunday," said this important personage, as the clock struck, "and I see nobody to-day." Upon which, "taking up his hat, he stalked off with dignity, saying, 'Let us depart in peace,'" and left the clergyman overwhelmed with indignation and astonishment. These things ought not so to be. On the Lord's day—in the midst of the city of London—in one of its most beautiful churches—not an individual attended for two successive sabbaths. There must be a cause for effects so awful.

and separation from the world, than the generality of their brethren. The number of these is of late amazingly increased. Where before scarcely a man of this stamp could be found, some hundreds, as rectors or curates in the established church, inculcate the doctrines which are branded with Methodism: and every where, throughout the kingdom, one or more, and sometimes several, are to be found within the compass of a few miles, who approve themselves faithful labourers in the Lord's vineyard. They naturally associate among themselves, and separate from the corruption which is in the world. Every where they carry the stamp of peculiarity, and are marked by their brethren. Though carefully conforming to established rules, and strictly regular, they are every where objects of reproach, because their conduct cannot but reflect on those who choose not to follow such examples. They pay conscientious attention to the souls of their parishioners; converse with them on spiritual subjects, wherever they visit; encourage prayer and praise in the several families under their care; often meet them for these purposes; and engage them to meet and edify one another. Their exemplary conversation procures them reverence from the poor of the flock, as their faithful rebukes often bring upon them the displeasure of the worldling, the dissipated, and the careless. They join in none of the fashionable amusements of the age, frequent not the theatres, or scenes of dissipation, court no favour of the great, or human respects; their time and services are better employed in the more important labours of the ministry, preaching the word in season, out of season, and counting their work their best wages. They labour, indeed, under many discouragements. All the superior orders of the clergy shun their society. They have been often treated by their diocesans with much insolence and oppression. They can number no bishop, nor scarcely a dignitary among them. Yet their number, strength, and respectability, continue increasing. May they grow into a host, like the host of God.

By the labours of these most excellent men the congregations of Methodists and dissenters are greatly enlarged; and though during their lives and incumbency, they fill their churches, and diminish the number of separatists; yet on their death or removal, they unintentionally add all the most serious part of their flocks to their brethren who are of a like spirit. For when the people have lost their good clergyman, and having no choice of a successor, find a man placed over them of an utterly different temper and conduct; in doctrine erroneous, as in his life unexemplary; they are naturally driven to seek the same means of edification to which they have been accustomed, and which God hath

given them the grace to know how truly to appreciate : as they have no such attachment to church walls, as to be confined to them, where *Ichabod* is written thereon. When therefore they can bear nothing truly edifying from their parish minister, they search out some Methodist chapel, or dissenting meeting, where the evangelical and reformed doctrines are taught, and where a people like themselves worshipping God in spirit, assemble for mutual edification; and if they can find no such, they raise one; associating among themselves, and appointing the most zealous and best informed to edify them; or making application for such to some one of the bodies of Methodists or Dissenters.

It is a pleasing feature of the present day, that the spirit of toleration and candour appears of late most diffused, and persecution discountenanced, though not utterly discontinued. During the first struggles of Methodism, many harsh and severe measures were taken, and wicked or prejudiced magistrates pushed the penal laws against sectaries to the extreme. Of late they have almost wholly slept, and those who were formerly despised and hated, at present are under a less odium from their profession, and more respected by their brethren. Their numbers have given them consequence in the national scale. The perilous times have engaged the chief attention of their countrymen. It is not a day to discourage religion, when impiety and infidelity are come in like a flood. Every government must perceive, that those citizens are most valuable, whose obedience and peaceableness are strengthened by religious principles.

The state of real godliness among us in general, has for some time past certainly been on the increase. The clergy in the church, many of them at least, have been engaged to change the strain of moral preaching, for some frequent notice of the orthodox principles of Christ's divinity and atonement, and the necessity of true holiness. But it must be confessed that even truth itself freezes upon the lips of those whose heart is not inflamed with the love of it; and who do not feel for others' souls by having felt the importance of seeking the salvation of their own.

The orthodox dissenters maintain a respectable profession. The Arian and Socinian congregations, which a few men of learning and philosophic attainments sought to support, have dwindled almost to nothing; and the only large and zealous bodies are those in which the ancient reformed doctrines are maintained with all their vigour; and this chiefly by ministers, who derive their birth from one or other of the great Methodist societies.

To this source also are to be chiefly traced the zealous and successful efforts made of

late by the Missionary Society, which have been already mentioned, to send the gospel among the heathen. And it may justly be reckoned among the singular and happy effects, which have already resulted from this attempt to evangelize the lands of darkness and despair, that such an endearing union and cordiality hath been restored among the various denominations of Christians, who had so long stood in a state of repulsion from each other. They have now agreed to sacrifice educational prejudices, and narrow bigotry, on the altar of christian love. English and Scots, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Methodists and Independents, have united in the great object of a heathen mission, and solemnly pledged themselves to each other, that neither politics, nor our different peculiarities shall mingle with the gospel truth, which we desire to impart to the nations, but that all who go on this self-denying service shall have but one injunction from us, to preach and teach Jesus Christ in primitive simplicity; prescribing no exclusive church order, or form of discipline; but wishing every man to maintain true communion with his brethren, and whenever success shall crown their labours, and congregations be formed among our black, or brown, or olive-coloured brethren, to avoid as much as possible all disputes about matters non-essential, to follow to the best of their judgments, the scriptural model of the gospel church; and to maintain carefully among themselves, the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Nor hath this noble attempt failed to attract the notice of our foreign brethren, whose correspondence hath testified their high delight at our commencements, who are praying for its abundant success, and in America, and on the Continent have been roused up to similar exertions, and are preparing to run the same race with us, where emulation is laudable, and ambition to excel a truly Christian grace.

The Missionary Society hath also produced the happiest effects at home. Many of its members have begun to exert themselves vigorously to spread the evangelical doctrines in their various neighbourhoods. Different itinerant societies have been established, in order to send instruction to the poor in the villages where the gospel is not preached; to open schools for their children; to converse with the ignorant, and visit the sick; and many congregations every Lord's day, send out some of their most zealous and intelligent members for these gracious purposes. By this means much attention hath been awakened in the souls of many, and promising appearances give good hope through grace, that this labour of love will not be in vain in the Lord. Probably not less than five hundred places for divine worship have been opened within the last three years.

Many of the episcopal clergy and others of sound principles, and faithful hearts, who for reasons apparently to them justifiable, had withheld themselves from the more enlarged society for missions, composed of all denominations, have felt themselves either reproved or excited to make some similar efforts among their brethren; confining themselves exclusively to the dominant profession. Their society is yet in embryo, but it will not want encouragement; and all who have the good of souls at heart must therein rejoice, if the gospel of Christ be more diffusely spread. Their success will gladden our hearts, and the more enlarged and vigorous their efforts, the more shall they be praised.

It would be truly happy if these movements on every side engaged the attention of the two long established Societies among us, for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Their funds are immense, and adequate to any undertaking. It is to be lamented that those, who have been chosen by them hitherto, have too often been selected with, so little regard to missionary talents; and that their vast revenues have not answered any very considerably useful purpose; at least none such as might have been hoped, if their choice had been more judicious, and the plans for promoting the gospel more vigorously pursued. Should a happy turn be given to these societies, and men of God arise, and be patronized by them, as they have all the countenance and help of government to forward their efforts, it is impossible to say what a door of entrance might be opened to the Gentiles, in the yet unexplored, and unattempted regions of the world; especially in New Holland; the isles of the Pacific Ocean; the northern parts of America; and above all, in the immense regions of Africa, still to us a *terra incognita*. A glorious scene! but I fear a blessing rather to be hoped than realized in my day, now drawing to its evening.

I am seeking the spiritual church of Christ, and I am filled with comfort at the spread of the gospel in our land. Multitudes in the established church, ministers and people, are blessed monuments of redeeming love. Multitudes of every other denomination stand high in faithful and vigorous exertions for the glory of our common Lord. I am sure he will say, I have much people in this place. And amidst all our miseries, which are not few, and our prospects, which, as a nation, have been abundantly discouraging, this is the great sheet anchor of hope to every real believer. If the Lord had meant to destroy us, he would have not shewed us, as Manoa's wife observed, such and such things.

It is true we have liberally partaken of the fashionable philosophy, and among the

wise, the mighty, and the noble, the empire of scepticism is widely extended, and faith despised as fable. It hath descended to the menial servant behind the chair, and to the drayman, who can blaspheme and deride religion. But against this enemy that cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord continues to lift up the standard of his gospel, and many are not ashamed to fight manfully under the banner of the cross. Indeed the mode of the contest is changed: it is not now between true religion and false religion, but between the true religion and no religion. Before I quit this subject, it may be worth a moment's attention, to sketch a portrait of the two great characters who eminently contributed to this revival of religion among us. As both favoured me with their cordial regard, and though more in unison with the one than the other, I have ever desired to give honour to whom honour is due, and hope never to be ashamed of the friendship of John Wesley.

John Wesley was of the inferior size, his visage marked with intelligence, singularly neat and plain in his dress; a little cast in his eye, observable on particular occasions; upright, graceful, and remarkably active. His understanding, naturally excellent and acute, was highly stored with the attainments of literature: and he possessed a fund of anecdote and history, that rendered his company as entertaining as instructive. His mode of address in public was chaste and solemn, though not illumined with those coruscations of eloquence which marked, if I may use that expression, the discourses of his rival George Whitfield; but there was a divine simplicity, a zeal, a veneration in his manner, which commanded attention, and never forsook him in his latest years; when at four-score he retained still all the freshness of vigorous old-age. His health was remarkably preserved amidst a scene of labour and perpetual exertions of mind and body, to which few would have been equal. Never man possessed greater personal influence over the people connected with him. Nor was it an easy task to direct so vast a machine, where amidst so many hundred wheels in motion, some moved eccentrically, and hardly yielded to the impulse of the main-spring. I need not speak of the exemplariness of his life, too many eyes were upon him to admit of his halting; nor could his weight have been maintained a moment longer, than the fullest conviction impressed his people, that he was an eminently favoured saint of God, and as distinguished for his holy walk, as for his vast abilities, indefatigable labour, and singular usefulness.

His enemies reviled him, and would if possible rob him of the meed of well deserved honour, by imputing to him objects below the prize he had in view. Never was

a more disinterested character ; but he was a man, and he must have been more than man, if with the consciousness of his own devotedness, the divine blessing on his labours, and the high admiration, in which he was held by his followers, he had not sometimes thought of himself more highly than he ought to think. We exhibit no faultless monsters. Elias was a man of like passions as ourselves.

His singular situation led him to imagine that the glorious Head of the Church favoured him with especial interpositions in his behalf, which he was sometimes ready to construe as miraculous.

He yielded a too credulous ear to the reports and pretensions of others, and was thus often the dupe of ignorance and presumption.

He hastily at times advanced, what farther information, or maturer judgment, compelled him to retract or soften.

In the article of marriage he acted contrary to the celibacy he professed to recommend ; but this change of sentiment and conduct implied nothing criminal, unless it were the precipitancy of his former determination.

His rooted aversion to the doctrines called Calvinistic, might be supposed to proceed from a conscientious apprehension, that they had an unfavourable aspect on the practice of spiritual religion, however groundless such supposition was in reality, and however evident the contrary effects appeared in those who held them. But his bitterness and asperity towards those who defended them, and his harsh imputations on the God they worshipped, whatever provocations he might plead, were utterly inexcusable.

But above all, that which appeared in Mr. John Wesley, the most censurable part of his conduct, was his very unfair statement of the arguments of his Calvinistic adversaries, which in a man of his acuteness of intellect, will hardly admit the plea of unintentional mistake.

I am called upon to speak the truth, and I do it from my heart, without respect of persons, to the best of my knowledge. Mr. Wesley is gone to give an account of himself to his proper Judge, by whom I doubt not all his iniquity is pardoned, and his infirmities covered. And now that envy and enmity have been some time laid asleep in his grave, I rejoice in observing his character rise in general estimation, and most highly respected by those who knew him best. It will now hardly be a question with any man, whether he would not rather have been John Wesley, who died not worth ten pounds, than Lavington, Bishop of Exeter, who so bitterly reviled him.*

* I cannot suppress an anecdote respecting this inveterate enemy of Methodists and Moravians. The author

George Whitfield was the son of an innkeeper at Gloucester. From his early youth he had received deep impressions of religion ; and he carried with him to the university of Oxford, a seriousness of mind very uncommon. He began his active career, even before he was in orders, visiting the prisons, and instructing the poor. Bishop Benson was so delighted with his early piety, that he ordained him at the age of twenty-one. And his first essay was a striking specimen of his future popularity, being heard with the most uncommon and awakened concern. His person was manly, and grew large, as he advanced in years, his voice remarkably musical, and capable of the most various intonations, with a natural eloquence, too singular not to command the most profound attention. His manner was often highly graceful and oratorical ; and though a cast in his eye, strongly marked, prevented the vivid impression which that organ is peculiarly suited to make, yet no man with such a disadvantage ever looked with stronger sensibility : and after a second hearing the defect was forgotten. Never man possessed a greater command of the human passions, or better knew the way to the consciences of his hearers : he had arrows in his quiver, that himself only knew how to sharpen. His literary attainments were moderate, though not defective in the learned languages ; but his thorough acquaintance with the Scripture, and the peculiar art of introducing and illustrating every subject he treated, not only won the ear to listen, but left an impression on the mind never to be effaced. His labours in both hemispheres were immense ; his courage undaunted ; his zeal unquenchable ; he fell a martyr to his work. The violence of his exertions often shook his constitution, whilst the more placid Wesley, with equal constancy of preaching, preserved his health to fourscore and upwards, unimpaired. Perhaps no man since the days of St. Paul, not even Luther himself, was ever personally blest to the call and conversion of so many souls from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, as George Whitfield. The immense collections he made for charitable purposes sharpened the tongue of slander. Time hath affixed the seal of integrity to all his procedures. He was reviled for his unguarded expressions, and some enthusiastic flights ; but he disarmed his ene-

of these volumes had been educated under the tuition of that venerable servant of Christ, Samuel Walker, minister of Truro. After studying at Oxford, intending to enter into holy orders, he applied to this bishop, with a testimonial from the country, signed by this apostolic labourer, Mr. Mitchell, rector of Verriam, and Mr. Penrose, vicar of Gluvias, men in the nearest intimacy with Mr. Walker, and clergymen of the first respectability in the diocese : but the bishop refused to countenance the testimonial, as " of men worthy of credit," and assigned as his reason, that this eminent saint of God " preached faith without works ! " It has been long since decided whose works have been found approved before the great Judge of quick and dead.

mies by ingenuous acknowledgments and correction of his mistakes. How a youth surrounded with such popularity, and conscious of his own powers, was preserved from hatching the old serpent's egg, laid in every human heart, is wonderful. The keen eye of malevolence was upon him ready to seize occasion against him, or to make it; and it is a proof of no inconsiderable excellence, where so many watched for his halting, that amidst the most virulent abuse, so little could be found justly to accuse him. They who knew him best must witness, how holily and unblameably he had his conversation in the world. Indeed he was so taken up with the unwearied labours of his ministry, in preaching, religious exercises, and advice to those who were daily applying to him, that he had sometimes scarcely leisure for necessary food. The very things for which he was abused, he esteemed his glory; and resolved to spend and be spent on the service of the souls for whom Christ died. But he had his spots, and so hath the sun. He would have himself acknowledged many more than the nearest of his friends, or the bitterest of his enemies could discover. He is now alike beyond censure or commendation. What I remarked in him, I will speak and not be ashamed.

In his preaching he sometimes pushed the ludicrous to the debasement of the dignity of the sacred ministry. He told a story so well, that it seduced him occasionally to pursue a vein of humour, more suited to excite risibility than to awaken seriousness; though some impressive truth always closed the relation.

The orphan house of Georgia, which he adopted with too partial affection, seems to have engaged him in difficulties and immensity of expense, greater than any utility which ever appeared to be derived from it; and the vast collections he made for it, though faithfully applied, gave a handle to the slanders of suspicion.

He too frequently indulged in censures of the clergy, which however just they might be, seemed the effect of resentment, and would rather tend to exasperate than conciliate their attention. Yet it is well known he was remarkably kind spirited, and averse to controversy and its bitterness; and his most intimate friends will bear me witness, that his temper was as amiable and his conversation as singularly cheerful, as his piety was deep and sincere.

On the whole, as a man, as a christian, as a minister, we shall not I fear look upon his like again speedily. After passing through evil report and good report, during more than thirty years of incessant labour, he entered into his rest in America, which had peculiarly benefited by his visits; having crossed the Atlantic thirteen times, to preach

the everlasting gospel, with the power of the Holy Ghost, sent down from Heaven. Whatever ignorance of his real character, the fatuity of prejudice, or the insolence of pride may have suggested, the day is coming, when his great and adorable Master will condemn every tongue that hath risen up in judgment against him, and say in the presence of men and angels, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

I have dwelt the longer on these scenes nearer our own homes, as to us more peculiarly interesting, and also, that should these volumes ever engage the attention of our foreign brethren, the true character of personages may be known, who have by their revilers, and an ungodly world, been so grossly misrepresented. Their record is with the Most High; and in his presence I speak what I have known, and testify what I have seen without partiality and without hypocrisy.

SCOTLAND.

I MUST more concisely pass over the state of the Scottish church; too much like the English, declined from her own first principles and primitive simplicity. Her ministers exalted in all human science and philosophical attainments above their predecessors; more polished in style and manners; deeper in mathematics and metaphysics; but not more evangelical, more zealous, more laborious. No where have more admired authors won the public approbation; no where have more dangerous and determined infidels appeared to corrupt the principles of the age: and the questions which have of late been discussed in the General Assembly, awfully demonstrate how great a body preponderates there, against the advocates for the ancient doctrines, and the faith once delivered to the saints.

As the Scottish church grew by degrees more and more into a worldly sanctuary, the abuses of patronage, and other things, which grieved and disgusted many of her most excellent pastors, produced divisions. These led to the presbytery of Relief, the Seceders, the Burghers, and Anti-burghers, the shades of whose differences this history cannot particularize. Yet among those much of the power of real godliness remained. An host arose, with the famed Erskines and their fellows at their head, who were zealous advocates for the truth as it is in Jesus, and sought to revive the life of religion in their several congregations. Their labours were eminently blessed, and remarkable out-pourings of God's Spirit have been recorded in many parts of that vineyard. I shun not to use expressions, which may be branded as enthusiastic by modern divines. I believe the Holy Ghost is yet given.

Truth compels me to say, that among these separatists of various denominations, the greatest zeal to promote the evangelical doctrines hath been displayed, though the established church hath not ceased to furnish many, very many eminent witnesses for God, not ashamed of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, but daring to be singular, and to bear his reproach. Under their ministry, a numerous and chosen people in the Scottish Kirk, as well as among the dissidents, continue to be reckoned to the Lord for a generation; and proportional to their numbers, the members of the Kirk are generally better informed, and more evangelical in profession, than the people in England. But great and awful declensions from gospel purity must be acknowledged and lamented. The increase of wealth and fashionable manners have not improved their moral system; whilst the love of many hath waxed cold amidst the prevailing taste for science and dissipation.

It is however a pleasing trait, and highly deserving mention in a work of this kind, that none have more cordially come forward in the heathen mission than our brethren in Scotland. The same spirit of charity and conciliation among the truly gracious of different denominations, hath softened down the bitterness of asperity, which had too frequently prevailed; and those have agreed to unite in labour and worship, who for a long while had been in a state of utter repulsion from each other; whilst the riches of their liberality have demonstrated how deeply they have the object at heart, of seeking the souls redeemed, in heathen lands, by the blood of the Lamb. Thus hath a body of confessors of evangelical truth, cleaving steadfastly to God, been yet preserved, as exemplary in their lives and labours, as sound in the faith, and able advocates for the ancient reformed doctrines. These, however unfashionable in the eyes of many, continue to be held fast by them as the most sacred deposit, and most inestimable treasure. Scotland, in general, hath shared with England, and like Jesurun, hath waxed fat and kicked. Such is human corruption, that the abounding gifts of Providence too often afford occasion of abuse. How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven? Yet, when the spiritual church is the object, North Britain will not be found the least among the thousand of Israel.

A blessed effort has of late been made to revive the spirit of evangelical religion more generally in Scotland, by a Missionary Society instituted for propagating the gospel at home. A number of zealous, well-informed men, have gone about preaching every where, and their labours have been attended with the happiest effects. Many have been roused from the torpor of indifference, many

called by their ministry out of darkness into marvellous light. This has awakened the enmity and jealousy of the craftsmen; and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland hath issued a pastoral admonition against these faithful labourers, which breathes a bitterness and asperity, that cannot fail of carrying its own antidote along with it, and holding up most strikingly to the view of every serious mind, the difference between the revilers and the reviled. Whoever is at the pains to examine facts, and the assertions in this philippic against the promoters of evangelical religion, will find as many falsehoods as lines; so that happily, the more it is read, the more essentially it must serve the cause which it was designed to reprobate. Thus does the Lord bring always good out of evil. The wrath of man shall praise him.

IRELAND,

STILL unhappily sunk in darkness and the superstitious of popery, and little more adorned with real evangelical knowledge in those who have assumed the name of Protestants, hath long afforded matter of much sorrow to such as looked for the life and power of religion. The same zealous advocates for spiritual godliness, above recorded, have passed from England into that kingdom; and what is called Methodism, hath spread out its branches through many parts of that nation. God has of late also graciously raised up a precious band of the clergy in the established church, though few indeed in number comparatively, and of small reputation among their fellows, yet are they earnestly endeavouring to revive a spirit of zeal and true christianity; to make the name of Jesus more precious, and his authority more respected. Many, I trust, by their labours, will, in the day of God, be written among the righteous; and when the Lord shall collect his redeemed, be found to have been born there.

It is to be lamented, that ignorance and popery still spread their thick mists over the bulk of the common people; and that the protestants maintain but little more than their name and immortal hatred to popery, the general profession of their fellow-subjects. Some change must shortly take place. The crisis approaches. May the God of all grace give a prosperous issue!

It is with pleasure I record a happy commencement of missionary labours among them, similar to that in Scotland. In Armagh and the province of Ulster, some faithful ministers, affected with the ignorance and desolations around them, associated for spreading the gospel, and resolved to endeavour to rouse their fellows to a deeper sense of religious truth. They invited some brethren from England to go over and labour

among them, as itinerants, in the province of Ulster, and they were heard with the most awakened attention. Multitudes of papists attended their ministry in opposition to all the warnings of their priests, and vast congregations assembled wherever these faithful labourers travelled through the province.

A similar association is formed at Dublin, for the same purpose, hoping to diffuse the knowledge of a Saviour's grace among their benighted countrymen, and to turn their minds from the miserable distractions of politics, to the greater concerns of the salvation of immortal souls. May their efforts be crowned with abundant success!

The other branches of the reformed church in America, and on the Continent of Europe, claim a few additional remarks, and will bring the whole of this period to its close.

THE BRITISH COLONIES,

ONCE so precious a limb of our political body, one with us in language and religion, but now separated from the parent stock, and flourishing under independent sovereignty, deserve a memorial in the history of the true church. From the beginning, a number of zealous ministers of the cross have maintained the power of godliness in that vast continent; and in many places singular revivals of the spirit of life have been remarked. Peace, riches, commerce, and increasing prosperity, indeed, had long ago contributed greatly to the introduction of luxury and corruption into the larger cities: and though a remarkable decency of conduct was still generally maintained; the sabbath honoured; and the stage, with its corrupting entertainments, universally prohibited; yet, as many grew more earthly and sensual, profligacy of manners spread and prevailed, and great declensions from the strictness of piety, which formerly distinguished them, were observable. To revive the work, the zealous Methodists, often and many of them crossed the ocean, and preached through all the Continent, as they had done in England, and with the greatest success. Those who were called by the ministry of Mr. Whitfield, formed congregations of their own, or joined with the Presbyterians or Independents, universally spread over that Continent. The societies of Mr. Wesley were united under him, and more approached the episcopal regimen. Accordingly one of that body, ordained a bishop by the nonjuring bishops, still subsisting in Scotland, continued that form of discipline: and another, I think, sustains the same office by the appointment or approbation of Mr. Wesley, at his last transatlantic visit. The zeal and activity of the Wesleyan Methodists, is highly commendable; and they number more than

eighty thousand in society, blacks as well as whites, besides a vast body of hearers, who are not received into bands and classes; the names given to the smaller private associations, into which, both men and women, separately, are distributed. Since the peace, the intercourse has been frequent, and preachers from the general conference go over, and cement the union between those abroad, in America, and the Leeward islands, and those at home. They are said to be in a very flourishing and increasing state.

But the general interests of religion in America have suffered greatly during the intestine broils. The life of a soldier is very inimical to the progress of godliness, and when men are violently agitated with the politics of this world, their minds are too much taken up to attend to the concerns of a better. In the scramble for wealth, power, and eminence, conscience is often warped by convenience and actions admitted, inconsistent with the strick piety of a holy conversation. Since the independence of the nation hath been established, a new race of men hath risen up: deeply engaged to enlarge the commerce, wealth, and importance of their republic; and, like others in such situations, too inattentive to the greater concerns of the world to come. The increase of riches, and unlimited liberty, naturally lead to dissipation in the greater cities, and to the establishment of all those fashionable sources of amusement and entertainment, which had been proscribed by the policy or severity of manners of the former generations. Playhouses are now opened, and furnished with English performers, and public places of pleasure invite the idle and luxurious to spend their evenings together; from which it would be too absurd an idea, to suppose they can return at so late an hour to meet their families in prayer and praise; practices which formerly obtained almost in every house.

Yet, amidst the vast increase of natives, and influx of strangers, many are still found fearing God and working righteousness. Nothing can be more conducive to the best interests of religion, than the perfect and complete toleration of every denomination of christians, there established as a fundamental law: the state not in the least interfering, nor supporting any dominant profession. As the vast number of episcopalians, settled in many of the provinces, required a bishop, the English bishops consecrated two for America: these, with the bishop from the nonjurors, continue the succession; and as they have no courts spiritual, no chapters, no cathedrals, no provision but the voluntary contributions of the faithful, no where, probably, will there be found of the prelatical corps, men more nearly approaching to primitive episcopacy. It only remains that they

should be multiplied and itinerate, to become more conformed to the apostolic model, if they possess but the apostolic spirit.

The most animated life of religion will probably be found in America, as in England among the Methodists, or those who share the reproach of the cross for their zeal and fidelity, and non-conformity to this world. The Moravians have a few precious congregations. The various denominations of Christians have many among them, who have tasted of the grace of God in truth. At New York and Connecticut, the late vigorous efforts to promote a heathen mission, demonstrate, that zeal is not extinct among the chief of their ministers and people; and, that though ungodliness and dissipation are come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord is still raising up faithful witnesses, to lift up a standard against them. America may not improbably yet afford a refuge for Europeans, if our miseries increase; and receive into its bosom the faithful in a day of persecution or desolation, which may yet be coming on the European nations.

The visit of a gracious brother from one of the northern colonies, enables me to add a report, as pleasing as authentic, of the present state of religion in his vicinity: and though Boston, and the more commercial towns, have lost much of the life of godliness, and the purity of gospel truth, both among ministers and people, there seems to be a large and increasing body in the different provinces, who hold fast the faithful word, and labour to fan the spark of heavenly love and zeal into a brighter flame of genuine Christianity.

No less than one hundred and twenty townships and parishes have experienced a very considerable revival of religion among them, and the progress seems increasing in the middle and northern parts of Connecticut, in many towns of Massachusetts, in some parts of Vermont, and the north western states of New York. In a single parish of these an hundred persons have been added to the number of the communicants in the space of one year: and like promising appearances have arisen in the western counties of Pennsylvania and South Carolina.

The Missionary Society of New York, has made an effort to send a mission to the Chickasaw Indians; and the Cherokees have communicated their desire of having faithful labourers among them, to teach them the way of salvation.

Thus an uncommon attention to the great concerns of an eternal world, seems lately to have been awakened, within a very short time, through many parts of this great Continent. The too neglected interests of their heathen Indian neighbours, also have been laid on the hearts of many faithful ones, and societies instituted, and commencing active

exertions for spreading the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to the Indians in their vicinity. How vast a field is open for their labours, an eye cast for a moment on the immense interior parts of that vast continent will discover. Where the harvest is so plenteous, may the gracious Lord grant that the labourers may not be few! But as the Americans have so greatly increased their population, and daily extend their settlements farther and wider, may the glorious light of the gospel of Christ be diffused on every side, and true christianity attend the progress of civilization and cultivation through the woods and wilderness of this rising empire.

A summary view of the nations on the Continent, where the reformed religion is professed, must terminate the subject. I shall begin with

GENEVA,

THE cradle of the reformation, and the Helvetic body adjacent. The same causes have there been productive of the same effects. Attachment to the peculiar doctrines of Calvin, Zanchius, and Œcolumpadius, has long been greatly weakened by the spread of the Arminian tenets, and by the progress of the new philosophy overturning all religion. The information I receive, misleads me, if through all the protestant cantons, the greatest decays are not visible. The Lord's day is closed with amusements, beyond the others; and those, who descend from the pulpits, partake of them with their flocks. Though a decency and sobriety of manners is yet preserved, the power of evangelical religion is little demonstrated in the ministers, or the people. The arch-infidel Rousseau, with all the strange oddities of the man, by his pleasing style and manner, spread his destructive opinions; and Voltaire, the more crafty and jealous rival of his fame, diffused in all his vicinity, and especially at Geneva, the poison of his scepticism, to which his scenic representations contributed not a little, by attracting the lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God. To him all flocked, who dwelt in the vicinage, and imbibed his abominations; and all who passed that way, from every quarter, were proud to be introduced to the high priest of infidelity, to admire his wit, adopt his ridicule, and be initiated into the mysteries of incredulity. Hence, I doubt, if there remains a single professor, or pastor, at Geneva, who adherers to Calvin, either in principle or practice; but the lowest form of moral essay, and Socinian Christianity prevails. The convulsions, under the name of liberty, have tended greatly to increase the general apostasy, and they are nearly become French in irreligion, as in politics.

Throughout Switzerland the same spirit

is too prevalent, though not without some happy exceptions from the prevailing infidelity. Basil still maintains a precious body of ministers, and others, associated to maintain and diffuse the principles and practice of the true evangelical religion. Their correspondence with the Missionary Society at London, speaks them men of the same heart and mind; and their exertions to diffuse the knowledge of a crucified Jesus in their vicinity, manifests the spirit of primitive love and zeal that animates them. May their numbers increase, and their labours be more abundantly blessed to the diffusion of light and truth on every side! The fraternization with France, whose armies have overrun the country, and destroyed their constitution, augurs no good to Helvetic liberty and prosperity, any more than to religion. We must wait, however, till the tornado is passed, to see whether its final effects will be destructive or salutary.

FRANCE,

ONCE distinguished for the purity of the reformed faith, and then, as we have seen, reduced to the greatest extremities, by the bigot persecutor Lewis, continues sunk very low in every religious view. I have mentioned before its declensions, and the cause of them; nor do I fear of any revivals, now that every link of the chain of popery is broken, and every man's bonds loosed. I am rather induced to think, the protestants themselves have drank as deeply as any others into the infidel philosophy: and, as long ago, they had greatly declined from the purity of doctrine, and the spirituality of religion, the late revolutions have produced no beneficial change; retaining only their immortal hatred of popery, that is now gratified to the uttermost, and none more cordially help forward the desolation of every ecclesiastic and monastic institution, than the protestants: but of any zeal in faithful labourers, or of living christianity among the protestant professors, I can find little evidence. A few, indeed, sigh over the abominations, and in the south of France a cry is heard for the pure word of God; but the labourers are not found, or compelled to conceal themselves. Every where else, amidst the tumults, conflicts, agitations prevalent, which have engrossed the attention, and seized upon the passions of mankind, little concern remains about any religion at all. The zeal of methodism made some feeble efforts to enter into Normandy and Brittany, whilst the communication was open: but every thing has been in a state so convulsed, and every foreigner liable to such suspicion, that, I apprehend, nothing can yet be done or hoped, till some settlement of the nation, with toleration, shall embolden the zealous to attempt, once

more, communicating to them the blessings of the everlasting gospel.

HOLLAND.

THE United Provinces have constantly maintained the Reformed Faith as the national profession; and with a great similitude to our own, adopt formulas, not really believed; and profess to receive the decisions of the synod of Dort, whilst in general, I fear, the ministers exhibit more the traits of Episcopius, and our own latitudinarian divines. The love of gold has generally prevailed over the love of godliness in the multitude; and the philosophic pride of reasoning hath sent forth from their universities, teachers too wise to submit implicitly to the reformed opinions of Calvin, or the creed of Athanasius. Less dissipated, indeed, yet more intent on gain, till the late desolations came upon them, religion in its vital power was too little known; a few good men still remained, who preached and taught Jesus Christ. A small body of Moravians, and a larger band of Mennonites, maintained a stricter attention to the worship and service of God; but in general an icy coldness of devotion, and dull formality, discharged the public weekly services at church: and little family religion, or associations for prayer or praise, were any where found. French influence, French manners, French government, now afford little prospect of amelioration: unless it be from the hope, that when matters come to the worst, they may mend. The profession of the nation, indeed, remains unchanged; yet one step has been taken to abolish that, by withdrawing, it is said, the stipends from the ministers of the national establishment. True religion can well subsist without an establishment; but when the power of godliness is lost, the form of it will quickly follow, when no longer supported by the state. The priest, whom men maintain to pray, will hardly continue his function when his salary ceases.

One happy trait of the revival of the spirit of godliness among them, hath of late appeared. Dr. Vanderkemp, a Dutch missionary, gone with others to the Caffre country, from the London Missionary Society, having first visited Holland to settle his affairs, dispersed an address from that body, which produced the happiest effects. A considerable number immediately associated for the same missionary purposes at Rotterdam, and continue to pursue with zeal this blessed object.

Another similar society has been recently formed at Aurich, in East Friesland; and as they are men of a like spirit with their missionary brethren, we cannot but hope that the most blessed effects will ensue, and faithful men be raised up in the spirit of pri-

mitive evangelists, to spread the true gospel of the grace of God, abroad and at home.

The present tempestuous moment, will, it may be hoped, be succeeded by some happy amelioration; and the inhabitants, from the scourge they have suffered, learn righteousness, and return to Him, from whom they have so greatly departed. If such be the event of all their sufferings, the issue will be peace.

GERMANY.

THIS pillar of the Reformation and primary beacon of divine light and truth is grievously defaced, and darkness hath again covered the earth. The Calvinists as well as Lutherans have too generally imbibed the principles of the infidel philosophy. Excluding the government of the all wise and righteous Jehovah, they have placed blind fate upon the throne, and substituted the doctrine of necessity, for God's predestination and grace. Scepticism leading to atheism naturally brings up the train of these depths of Satan. The wise above what is written, pride themselves in the acuteness and freedom of their researches, and those who are trained up for the ministry in the universities and seminaries of learning, unless my information misleads me, are early initiated in these anti-christian principles, and commence their career with the purpose of debasing the faith which they are obliged to engage solemnly to maintain; whilst he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And should any man appear zealous for truth, and exhibit traits of holy walking with God, he would infallibly bring on himself a stigma of peculiarity, and render himself alike obnoxious to his teachers and fellow students. Thus educated, and thus ministering, it cannot be expected but that the consequences should follow, which are too evident. And even where more daring blasphemy against the fundamental doctrines of christianity does not lift up its banner, a state of lifeless torpor and indifference prevails. The forms of religion are hastily and perfunctorily discharged, whilst a life of worldly conformity or scientific pursuits leaves scarce a trace visible of the mind of Christ, and of a conversation in Heaven.

Among all the states and free cities professing the reformed faith, I can procure no information of any remarkable revivals of evangelical truth and spirituality of religion. I cannot however doubt, but that, in many places of that vast country, there are found men of a true heart holding fast the head Christ, who search the scriptures daily, and, as their confessions and forms of worship are conformable to its dictates, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, whose cross they bear, by a zeal for the truth as it is in

him, and by a conduct formed on the bright model of his own great example. But among ministers and people these happy exceptions are too few, whilst the general body is carried down with the torrent of infidelity and dissipation, worldly pursuits, or science falsely so called.

That God hath not left himself without witnesses, may be concluded from some evangelical associations lately formed, with a view of reviving the work of the Lord in these present evil days: the spirit which breathes in their correspondences, witnesses that the vital spark of genuine christianity still glows in the bosom of a few, who are waiting for the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and crying to him as his elect, day and night, that he would hasten his work, and kindle such a flame of love and zeal, as all the waters of opposition cannot quench, nor all the floods of false philosophy be able to extinguish.

From the whole of this view of the Reformed church, we may perceive every where, throughout its extent, a chosen generation, a peculiar people, often indeed thinly dispersed, and in some countries apparently declining; in others exhibiting stronger symptoms of vitality, and striving against the evil around them, with some happy success; and with an increasing number of faithful labourers. Nor in any comparative view of the days which are past, can the present be counted inauspicious. I am rather disposed to think and hope, that the end of the eighteenth century hath produced as plentiful a harvest in the gospel field as any of the seasons of revival since the time of the reformation.

In no æra have the doctrines of the gospel been more clearly opened, and by a greater variety of able and faithful men, and probably at no time since the days of the apostles, shall we be able to produce a greater number of christians, who could give a sounder and more explicit reason of the hope that is in them, derived from views more purely evangelical; and who walk more closely with God, in righteousness and true holiness.

CONCLUSION.

In following the church of Christ through the wilderness of this world, we have beheld scenes highly glorious, and deeply afflictive: the mighty power of the Great Head of the Church, preserving it through the fires, and the constant opposition of the god of this world, to disturb its peace, and sully its purity. In all ages the same corrupt nature of man hath been seen producing the same effects, in the exercise of proud reasoning, worldly pursuits, and sensual enjoyments; and the influence of divine grace hath appeared in casting down these imaginations,

and bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ; in weaning the affections from this world, and fixing them by realizing views of faith on a better. Thus two sorts of persons figure on the scene, and only two; the children of God, and the children of the wicked one: the latter always the many, the mighty and the wise, the former the few, the poor, and the despised of this world; comparatively inferior in all that men esteem, and only great in the sight of God. How in the unequal struggle a body of such evident inferiority hath been preserved, is among the manifest evidences of his care, and the fulfilment of his promises, who hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

The first age exhibited the blaze of gospel light in all its purity and vigour, and the triumphs of the cross over the power, craft, and malice of men. But clouds soon obscured the face of day: and though many were purified through the fires of martyrdom, and the body of the church was seen extending her wide arms to embrace the then known world, yet the enemy began to sow his tares among the wheat, and they sprang up so vigorously as threatened to choke the good seed. The profession growing general, and the power of godliness declining, no sooner had christianity gained an establishment, than we see the church sinking into a worldly sanctuary; and ambition, pride, and avarice seated in the high places, and claiming unhallowed dominion over the consciences of men. For more than ten centuries, things continued to go from evil to worse, till all religion at last seemed lost and buried, in name and form, in superstition and tyranny. A few indeed in every age, reduced very low, sometimes apparently to two or three witnesses, continued prophesying in sackcloth, to a world lying in wickedness. But God remembered mercy. His promises must be fulfilled in their season. A day of revival broke; the light diffused itself on every side, a beam of it hath passed unto the ends of the earth. However sad our declensions have since been, God hath never forsaken his church and people. Times of refreshing have come from the presence of the Lord. In our own land remarkable interpositions of his arm made bare have appeared; and greatly as our faith is often discouraged by the lukewarmness of the friends of truth, and the might and multitude of its enemies, yet how much more reason have we to hope, and how much more encouragement for exertion, than in the first days of reformation? It appears much more practicable now to preach the gospel among all

nations, than at that day to evangelize the smallest district. Great and manifold indeed are the discouragements yet in the way; fear and unbelief magnify the difficulties; and too many despairing of the event, discourage their brethren, and weaken their hands; but surely if God will work, then none can let it. Instruments will not be wanting for the greatest and most extensive exertions, when he in his providence opens the door of entrance, and by his Spirit shall rouse up the zeal of very many, to say here am I, send me. We have seen strange things in our day, which could hardly have been imagined, even a few years ago; and who can tell, but that we may see greater things than these, when the adorable Lord shall take to himself his great power and reign; when all the ends of the earth shall remember themselves, and be turned unto the Lord, and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God. Such events the prophecies bid us expect; such the promises embolden us to hope, will shortly come to pass. It is not by lying down in despondence, but by rising up with resolute determination to be found active in the cause of God and truth, that the work will be done. Let every faithful individual but solemnly and seriously inquire, what can I do? resolving to spare no labour; to decline no hardship; to omit no proper means; but sacredly to devote his person, substance, influence, abilities, to advance the kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and it is impossible to say, what an amazing progress may be made in the course of a very few years. Whenever such a spirit, poured out from on high, shall animate the bosom of the real followers of the Lamb, then shall we see him coming with power and great glory. All obstacles will be laid low; all difficulties surmounted; and the church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven, collected from the four corners of the earth, shall compose one fold under one Shepherd.

If any thing written in these pages shall stir up the heart of but one man to pray more fervently for this blessed advent—if it fire one tongue to speak more boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus—if it shall have removed the least of our unhallowed prejudices against each other—or tended to conciliate the faithful few, whom education or bigotted asperity had disunited—if it shall help to concentrate our efforts more vigorously in the one great object, and to hasten the desirable event—then shall I not regret the labour of this research, and shall hope that I have not lived or written in vain.

39

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